

Chapter IV — Narrative of Events of February and March 2011

A. Introduction

186. Chapter IV provides a narrative of the events that occurred in Bahrain in February and March 2011, including the events that occurred at the GCC Roundabout. The Chapter is organised into daily accounts. Subsequent consequences arising from these events are covered in the remaining Chapters. Events that occurred at Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC) are covered in Chapter V, for they raise issues related to a specific place with a unique public service status. In recounting the events, this Chapter also provides the broader context within which the events took place. There are, however, descriptions of events and analysis of context in other Chapters that are more specific and relevant to issues discussed therein.

B. Narrative of Events that Occurred in Bahrain in February and March 2011

January 2011

187. Starting in late January 2011, ideas began to circulate on a number of online forums and social networking platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, which included calls for demonstrations to demand political, economic and social reform in Bahrain. These protests were designed to emulate the popular uprisings that had erupted first in Tunisia and then in Egypt, which ultimately led to the ousting of Presidents Zein Elabedin Ben Ali and Hosny Mubarak.

Early February 2011

188. A Facebook page called “February 14th Revolution in Bahrain” was established to call for mass protests throughout Bahrain on 14 February 2011. The page quickly gained popularity and several thousand people joined it. The date for the proposed demonstrations was chosen to coincide with both the tenth anniversary of the referendum on the National Action Charter, which was held on 14-15 February 2001, and the ninth anniversary of the day on which the current Constitution was promulgated and Bahrain was declared a constitutional monarchy.

189. A group calling itself “The Youth of the February 14th Revolution” issued a statement outlining a list of steps that, in their view, were necessary to achieve “change and radical reforms in the system of government and the management of Bahrain, the absence of which [had] caused continuous unease in the relationship between the people and the regime.” The authors of this statement claimed to be unaffiliated with any political movement or organisation, and disavowed any religious, sectarian or ideological bases for their demands. They also emphasised that the demonstrations they intended to organise would be peaceful. The statement included the following demands:

- a. Disband the National Assembly.
- b. Abrogate the current Constitution and form a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution, which should stipulate the following:
 - i. Legislative authority is vested in a parliament all the members of which must be elected;
 - ii. Executive authority is exercised by an elected Prime Minister; and
 - iii. Bahrain is a constitutional monarchy ruled by the Al Khalifa family. However, members of the Royal Family are barred from holding top positions in the three branches of government.
- c. Release all political prisoners and human rights activists, and establish a national commission to investigate allegations of torture and harassment of those people and to hold the perpetrators accountable.
- d. Guarantee freedom of expression, refrain from harassing journalists and bloggers, ensure freedom of the internet and State television, and end the intervention of government security agencies in the work of the media.
- e. Ensure the independence and depoliticisation of the judiciary.
- f. Establish a national commission to investigate claims of politically motivated naturalisation, and revoke the Bahraini citizenship of anyone who acquired it either for political purposes or in violation of the applicable laws.

190. Other statements outlining similar demands appeared on the internet and were circulated among Bahrainis. Unrecognised political movements, including Haq and the Bahrain Islamic Freedom Movement, issued statements in support of the planned protests. Later, on 13 February, the officially recognised political association Wa'ad issued a statement supporting the principle of the right of the youth to demonstrate peacefully. None of the other officially recognised political societies issued a statement explicitly calling for the protests.

Friday, 4 February 2011

191. During his Friday prayer sermon, which by some estimates was attended by 5000 people, the Secretary General of the Al Wefaq National Islamic Society (Al Wefaq), Sheikh Ali Salman, is reported to have commented on the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. Sheikh Ali Salman affirmed that the people of the Arabian Gulf were as determined as the Tunisians and Egyptians to achieve change, and called for political reform that would ensure the stability of the constitutional monarchy in Bahrain while allowing for peaceful competition over executive power. These reforms, he said, would contribute to affirming the human dignity of every Bahraini.

Sheikh Ali Salman concluded his sermon by requesting that those intending to participate in a planned demonstration at the Egyptian Embassy should remain peaceful and refrain from attacking police.

192. The demonstration at the Egyptian Embassy was held to express support for the ongoing popular uprisings in Egypt, which eventually led to the ousting of President Hosny Mubarak on 11 February 2011.

193. The calls to organise demonstrations starting on 14 February and the ongoing popular protests in other Arab countries led the Ministry of Interior (MoI) to take precautionary measures in anticipation of any protests that might be organised in Bahrain. These steps included the following: increasing the preparedness of police units; deploying more patrols in various neighbourhoods; and heightening security at important locations such as government offices, diplomatic premises, banks, religious sites and public works facilities.

Friday, 11 February 2011

194. Leading Shia cleric Sheikh Issa Qassim delivered a Friday prayer sermon in which he reportedly discussed the ongoing popular unrest in Tunisia and Egypt and stated that the winds of change in the Arab world were unstoppable. In relation to Bahrain, Sheikh Issa Qassim reaffirmed the call to redraft the Constitution in accordance with the principles of a constitutional monarchy in which the government is elected by the people. He also called for efforts to combat crime, release political prisoners and end practices like torture, religious discrimination and harassment of activists.

195. Similarly, Sheikh Ali Salman dedicated his Friday prayer sermon at the Al-Sadek Mosque to discussing regional developments and their relevance to Bahrain. The sermon expressed the view that Bahrainis had voted in favour of the National Action Charter in 2001 because they aspired to establish a true constitutional monarchy in Bahrain. This aspiration, according to Sheikh Ali Salman, had not yet been achieved. This was seen, for example, in the reality that unlike other constitutional monarchies, the Prime Minister of Bahrain was from the Ruling Family. Sheikh Ali Salman also criticised the broad legislative powers granted to the unelected Majlis Al-Shoura. These and other aspects of the Constitution were seen as contradicting the spirit of the National Action Charter. Sheikh Ali Salman declared that Al Wefaq's position regarding the call for popular protests on 14 February was that the right to demonstrate was legally guaranteed and should be exercised peacefully.

Saturday, 12 February 2011

196. Several limited incidents of unrest were reported in various parts of Bahrain. These included an attack against a police patrol in Al Dair, a small fire in Sahel Al-Bahr and an assault on a private vehicle in East Riffa.

197. His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa issued a Royal Decree granting each Bahraini family a Royal bequest of 1000 BD on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the approval of the National Action Charter.

Sunday, 13 February 2011

198. Limited demonstrations were reported in a number of districts in Manama and in neighbouring villages. These included a rally of over 100 people in the Sabah Al Salem area and a similar gathering in the Karzakan neighbourhood. Some clashes occurred between riot control forces and protesters in various locations, including Sitra, Bani Jamra and Tashan, which led to minor injuries among both police and protesters. Among those injured in these confrontations was one person who sustained an injury caused by a rubber bullet.

199. No applications were made to obtain authorisation for any demonstrations as required Emiri Decree Law No. 18 of 1973 on the Organisation of Public Meetings, Rallies and Assemblies.

Monday, 14 February 2011

200. Demonstrations and political rallies erupted throughout Bahrain. No applications were made for permission to demonstrate on 14 February. Nonetheless, police were deployed in various areas of Manama and neighbouring villages in anticipation of demonstrations. These protests varied in size and political orientation. Some were confined to specific locations in Manama and other cities, while others took the form of street marches and rallies that began in certain neighbourhoods and moved towards the main roads near those areas. The numbers of people participating in these protests ranged from tens of persons to over 1000 persons. The total number of protesters participating in demonstrations throughout the country that day was estimated to be over 6000. The slogans raised during these demonstrations varied, with some focusing on political grievances and others adopting socio-economic demands.

201. In anticipation of the potential injuries that could arise out of these demonstrations, the SMC administration declared a state of emergency in the hospital.

202. The earliest recorded demonstration began at 05:30 in Nuwaidrat. It was reported to have started at the Sheikh Ahmad Mosque and moved towards the main road. As the demonstration proceeded, the number of participants reached around 300. At this point, upon determining that the demonstration was unauthorised, riot police began taking measures to disperse the demonstrators. A number of demonstrators were wounded and one was hospitalised.

203. Meanwhile, around 30 people gathered at a roundabout in Nuwaidrat with posters calling for constitutional and political reform. Police did not confront these demonstrators.

204. As the day proceeded, protests increased in size and spread to various parts of Bahrain. Police continued to confront unauthorised demonstrations and attempted to disperse them. These included a gathering of around 150 people in Al Deraz, which clashed with police leading to the hospitalisation of three demonstrators. Similarly, one demonstrator was wounded when police blocked a rally of around 200 demonstrators in Sanabis. Demonstrations of varying sizes were also reported in other villages and neighbourhoods. These

included the following: 200 demonstrators in Sheikh Ali Salman Street; 40 demonstrators in Al-Mekasha'; 100 demonstrators in the vicinity of Jidhafs; 150 demonstrators in Karbabad; and 140 demonstrators in Abou-Sobey'. Later in the afternoon, more demonstrations were reported in numerous areas of Bahrain, some of which witnessed limited incidents of violence. For example, at 16:00 police dispersed a demonstration of around 400 demonstrators in Nabi Saleh after garbage dumpsters were set on fire. Similarly, when police units blocked a protest of around 1000 people in Sitra, demonstrators started throwing rocks and other objects at police vehicles and personnel.

205. By sunset, demonstrations had spread to other neighbourhoods that had been calm earlier in the day. These included the areas of Belad Al-Qadim, Al-Ekr Al-Gharby, A'Ali Roundabout, Hamad Town, Babar, Al Hagar, Malkeyya, Bani Hamza and Bab Al Bahrain. The sizes of these gatherings ranged from 10-20 to 500-700 demonstrators. No serious injuries requiring hospitalisation were reported during these demonstrations.

206. At around 20:00, Mr Ali Abdulhadi Almeshaima was fatally shot while police were attempting to disperse a demonstration in Daih.²³⁷ This was the first death to be recorded during the events of February/March. Accounts of the circumstances leading to the death of Mr Almeshaima varied. According to investigations undertaken by the MoI, Mr Almeshaima was participating in an unauthorised demonstration of around 800 people, which attacked a police patrol of eight police officers, using rocks and metal rods. When the demonstrators came within a few metres of the police unit, which had exhausted its supply of tear gas and rubber bullets, police resorted to firing one shotgun round and struck Mr Almeshaima in the back. The family of the victim contested this account of events. They denied that there were any demonstrations in the area and claimed that Mr Almeshaima left his residence at 20:00 and was shot by a police patrol shortly thereafter for no apparent reason. The victim was taken to SMC where, despite attempts to resuscitate him, he was pronounced dead at 20:20. On 15 February, the MoI ordered an internal investigation into this incident.

207. On the evening of 14 February, several hundred individuals gathered at SMC. Most of those stood in the car park adjacent to the Emergency Section. Others, including some protesters and journalists, entered the recovery room in the Emergency Section where they reportedly took photographs of injured individuals and interviewed the family of Mr Ali Almeshaima.

208. Further demonstrations were recorded later that night, including gatherings of around 200 demonstrators in Karzakan and around 300 in Damistan. The first gathering at SMC was reported at approximately 21:00 involving around 200 demonstrators. Meanwhile, at 23:20 a rally marched down the Salmaniya and King Faisal Roads towards the GCC Roundabout,

²³⁷ The facts of this case are discussed in detail in Chapter VI, Section A.

where numerous police had been deployed. When protesters refused to halt their procession, police arrested 24 individuals.

209. According to one estimate, a total of 55 protests of various sizes took place in Bahrain on 14 February. As noted above, some of the demands expressed during these demonstrations included revising the Constitution, undertaking political reform and achieving greater socio-economic justice. In addition to the death of Ali Almeshaima and injuries suffered by other protesters, noted above, there were reported attacks by protesters against police personnel, vehicles and security patrols that had been dispatched to disperse unauthorised demonstrations.

Tuesday, 15 February 2011

210. Early in the morning of 15 February, small gatherings were reported in a number of neighbourhoods, including Al Deraz and Ras Ruman. Reports indicated that garbage dumpsters and one private vehicle were set on fire.

211. The funeral procession of Mr Ali Almeshaima was held later in the morning and attracted the largest number of persons of any gathering on this day in Bahrain. People began to gather at the SMC morgue at 06:30 in anticipation of the release of the victim's body. The number of people continued to increase until it reached over 1000 by 08:30, when Mr Almeshaima's body was released to his family. The procession departed from the SMC morgue and headed towards the Jidhafs cemetery, where Mr Almeshaima was laid to rest. According to some reports, the number of mourners reached 2500 by the time the procession reached the cemetery.

212. As the procession moved down the Salmaniya Road, some of the mourners noticed two police patrol cars parked beside the Sana Department Store. The first of these vehicles had broken down, while the second had been dispatched to secure the location while police prepared the first vehicle to be towed away. At 08:47, a group of mourners, reported to be around 400 people, approached the police and started assaulting them, at first verbally and then by throwing rocks and metal rods. Some of the police suffered minor injuries, and a patrol car and tow truck were slightly damaged.

213. As the situation worsened, the seven police personnel at the location began responding to the mourners using sound bombs, tear gas and rubber bullets. Then, according to MoI reports, the mourners became more aggressive and came within metres of the police patrol to the extent that they managed to seize and destroy one of the police's tear gas launchers. At this point, and after all other ammunition had been exhausted, police are reported to have fired two shotgun rounds at the mourners, after which they evacuated the location.

214. Fadel Salman Ali Salman Matrouk was struck in the back by one shotgun round at very close range, estimated to be one metre.²³⁸ He was immediately taken to SMC, where attempts to resuscitate him failed and he

²³⁸ The facts of this case are discussed in detail in Chapter VI, Section A.

was pronounced dead at 09:30. He was the second fatality of the February/March events. The MoI ordered an investigation soon after.

215. This second death further increased public anger. Demonstrators began to gather at the SMC morgue and at various locations in Manama and neighbouring villages, including Shahrakkan, Bani Hamza and Sitra. Meanwhile, after the funeral procession of Mr Ali Almeshaima, more people joined the demonstrators and moved towards the GCC Roundabout, where they arrived at around 15:00. By 15:15, demonstrators began to set up tents at the roundabout, and later in the day a projector screen was installed. Among these was a tent erected by members of the SMC medical staff. There were also a number of demonstrators obstructing traffic in the roundabout overpass. By nightfall, the number of demonstrators had reached several thousand. The roundabout and its immediate vicinity were congested with protesters and private vehicles. Police in the area neither engaged the demonstrators nor did they attempt to disperse them. King Hamad had ordered that members of the procession be allowed to occupy the GCC Roundabout to express their sadness.

216. As the day proceeded, more protests and limited incidents of violence were reported in various places, including A'Ali and Sahla Al-Janubiyah, where some tyres were burned to obstruct traffic. Meanwhile, shop owners in the Sheikh Abdulla Street in the Manama market stated that unidentified masked individuals entered their property and demanded that they close their shops.

217. That night, King Hamad gave a televised address to the nation on the occasion of Al-Mawled Al-Nabawy (the Islamic celebration of Prophet Mohamed's – PBUH – birth). The King expressed his condolences for the two deaths and announced the establishment of a committee headed by Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Salem Al Orrayed to identify the reasons for the events of the previous two days. The King also reaffirmed the right of Bahrainis to exercise their freedom of expression and assembly in accordance with the law.

218. Meanwhile, the Al Wefaq members of the Council of Representatives (Majlis al-Nawab) announced that they would suspend their participation in the Council's sessions, and the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU) announced calls for a general strike on 17 February. Later, SMS messages from unidentified senders were circulated to encourage people to join the strike.

Wednesday, 16 February 2011

219. The death of Mr Matrouk the previous day and the numerous clashes that had occurred between demonstrators and police in various parts of Bahrain heightened public discontent and triggered the organisation of further demonstrations. The GCC Roundabout remained under the control of demonstrators, whose numbers fluctuated throughout the early hours of the day.

220. At 07:40, the first major gathering of the day was recorded at the SMC morgue, where protesters were preparing for the funeral procession of Mr Matrouk. The number of mourners continued to increase until it reached around 800 by 08:30. At that point, the victim's body was released to his family and the funeral procession started at SMC and marched towards the Um Al-Hasm cemetery. The procession gradually increased in size until it included approximately 1500 people. No confrontations between police and mourners were recorded.

221. At around 13:00, a gathering of people was reported near the Al-Fateh mosque in the Al-Juffair neighbourhood of Manama. This gathering quickly turned into a procession of about 100 vehicles expressing their support for HM King Hamad. There was no recorded attempt by police to block or disperse this rally.

222. The Prime Minister, HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and the Minister of Justice gave separate press conferences in which they expressed regret for the two deaths that had occurred during the previous two days and reaffirmed that Bahrain was governed on the basis of the rule of law. They also emphasised that dialogue was the solution to the unrest in Bahrain and that such dialogue should happen in the National Assembly.

223. Meanwhile, the number of protesters at the GCC Roundabout increased and reached around 6000 by 16:00, according to some estimates. The participants in the demonstrations represented, according to many accounts, a cross-section of Bahraini society, and their demands and slogans varied. Some participants called for revision of the Constitution, some demanded democratic reforms and some expressed grievances relating to economic and social disempowerment. Some eyewitness accounts described the mood at the roundabout as "festive" with tea, coffee and food being passed out to protesters as they exchanged views on the situation in Bahrain.

224. Political figures and prominent personalities are reported to have visited the roundabout, some of whom gave statements and made speeches outlining their views on the situation in Bahrain and their demands for political and economic reform. These included the leader of the Al Wafa' opposition movement, Abdulwahab Hussein, and the Al Wafaq Secretary General, Sheikh Ali Salman.

225. Despite the large number of demonstrators in the vicinity of the roundabout during the afternoon, they did not yet completely obstruct the flow of traffic. On the nearby Sheikh Ali Salman overpass, however, there were reports of unidentified individuals impeding traffic. Some of these people were seen distributing leaflets and posters, while others were reported to have been stopping private vehicles and removing any pro-government posters placed on them. Traffic was also obstructed or diverted in various parts of Manama, including at the King Faisal juncture in Al Budaiya, the Dar Kulaib club in Dar Kulaib and Mahmoud Al-Elwi Street in Al Suwaifiya.

226. At the political level, a meeting was held between the Crown Prince, HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and representatives of the

Al Wefaq, including its Secretary General Sheikh Ali Salman. According to the latter's account, this meeting was held on the basis of an understanding that the Crown Prince was prepared to consider the significant demands for reform being expressed in demonstrations. During these discussions, which reportedly lasted for three hours, Al Wefaq voiced its reservations about the existing Constitution, expressed discontent with aspects of the GoB's performance, its composition and powers, and asked that demonstrators at the GCC Roundabout be allowed to remain there. According to Al Wefaq's account of the meeting, despite having previously agreed to consider the significant reform demands, the Crown Prince stated that he was not mandated to reach an agreement on these issues. The Crown Prince suggested that demonstrators move to a more secure location because the GoB was concerned for their safety from possible attacks by vigilantes.

227. That evening, Sheikh Ali Salman visited the GCC Roundabout for the first time, and gave a short statement in which he expressed support for the protest movement and the demands being expressed in the demonstrations.

228. The number of protesters at the GCC Roundabout continued to increase until it reportedly reached over 12,000 by 23:00.

Thursday, 17 February 2011

229. At around 03:00, orders were issued to police to regain control of the GCC Roundabout and clear the area of all demonstrators, who were estimated to number around 1500 individuals who had stayed in the tents. According to MoI reports, four battalions, totalling over 1000 people, were dispatched to participate in the operation. These police were armed with sticks, shields, sound bombs, tear gas launchers and shotguns. Police also carried standard side arms. In addition, personnel from the National Security Agency (NSA), the MoI Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and BDF Intelligence were onsite. Reports from some opposition political parties have claimed that the units executing the operation were BDF units dressed in police uniform. Conversely, government reports have asserted that BDF personnel were not involved in this operation, and that military units in the area remained on standby to provide assistance to the police forces if needed.

230. The operation began with instructions broadcasted for a period of five minutes on a megaphone ordering the demonstrators to leave. According to some accounts, demonstrators did not hear these instructions because they were issued from above the overpass adjacent to the roundabout. Police reports, however, indicated that these instructions were heard because some demonstrators replied with statements described as defiant and refused to comply.

231. Three of the four police battalions at the location then entered the roundabout from various points and cleared it of demonstrators. These forces also removed all the tents that had been placed in the roundabout, including the tent erected by members of the SMC medical staff. The fourth battalion remained at the adjacent overpass to secure the rear of the advancing forces. According to police reports, two roads were left open to provide an exit for

people leaving the roundabout. Some protesters refused to leave and began resisting and assaulting the police, using stones, rocks, metal rods, swords, and other sharp objects. Reports also indicate that a number of protesters attempted to run over police officers with their cars. The police responded by firing tear gas, rubber bullets and shotgun rounds. The operation lasted 20-30 minutes, after which all protesters had been evacuated and dispersed to neighbouring streets and alleys.

232. It was subsequently discovered that police had fatally shot the following three individuals: Mr Mahmood Maki Ahmed Abutaki; Mr Ali Mansoor Ahmed Ahmed Khudair; and Mr Ali Ahmed Abdulla Ahmed. They had all sustained fatal wounds caused by shotgun pellets fired at close range. According to MoI reports and investigations, these three victims had been among those who refused to evacuate the GCC Roundabout and participated, in conjunction with others, in assaulting police who were then compelled to fire shotgun rounds at them in self-defense.²³⁹

233. Investigations undertaken by the MoI following the clearing operation revealed that over 50 demonstrators had sustained various types of injuries, while 47 police were wounded, some severely, during the confrontations. Post-operation searches of the roundabout found four pistols and bullets as well as large quantities of knives, daggers, swords and other sharp objects in the area. While there were no reports of police sustaining gunshot wounds, many were injured by sharp objects similar to those found at roundabout. Some police officers sustained wounds when protesters attempted to run them over with their vehicles.

234. At 04:20 a group of protesters gathered on the King Faisal Highway and began to march towards the GCC Roundabout, which was now under the complete control of government security services. According to MoI reports, those protesters assaulted a security patrol on duty in the Al Gufool area by throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at the patrol, and attempted to seize a weapon carried by one of its personnel. The police fired at the protesters, leading to the death of Mr Issa Abdul Hussein Ali Hassan who sustained injuries caused by a shotgun round fired at his head from very close proximity (estimated to be a few centimetres). This raised the total number of civilian fatalities during the events that occurred in Bahrain to six cases up to this time.

235. Around 500 protesters later gathered in the Naim neighbourhood and attempted to re-enter the GCC Roundabout, but police confronted and dispersed the group. By 17:45, eight armoured vehicles from the Bahrain National Guard were deployed in the vicinity of the roundabout in the direction of the Al-Seef district to provide support for police units stationed in the area. In addition, the BDF announced that some of its units would be dispatched to heighten security at vital locations in the capital.

236. That afternoon, an MoI spokesperson delivered a presentation on Bahrain Television about the events at the GCC Roundabout. The

²³⁹ The facts of these cases are discussed in detail in Chapter VI, Section A.

presentation was accompanied by footage taken during the operation to evacuate the roundabout. The spokesperson explained that the demonstration at the roundabout had been unauthorised and that security forces had commenced the clearing operation by instructing the demonstrators using megaphones. He then stated that women and children had been evacuated first and provided with transportation out of the area, after which the operation had begun using sticks and tear gas. The spokesperson stated that shotguns had only been used for self-defence. He also showed examples of the injuries that police personnel had sustained during the operation, which included the cutting of the fingers of one police officer, and displayed the weapons found at the roundabout after the operation.

237. At 15:00, the BDF General Command issued a statement announcing that armed BDF units had been deployed to Manama in an effort to ensure the safety and security of citizens and foreign residents and their property. The statement affirmed that the BDF was prepared to take punitive action to restore stability, and called on all individuals to avoid gathering at vital locations in the centre of the capital.

238. In response, Al Wefaq issued a statement rejecting the narrative presented by the MoI and refuting the claim that demonstrators at the roundabout had been armed. A coalition of seven political societies subsequently issued a joint statement condemning what they described as “the heinous massacre” perpetrated by police while clearing the GCC Roundabout of demonstrators. The statement called for members of the Council of Ministers to submit their resignation and demanded the formation of a national salvation cabinet to oversee the drafting of a new constitution and enable the country to overcome the existing political crisis. The statement also warned that if the GoB continued to adopt policies that violated human rights, confrontations would occur leading to “unending bloodbaths”. The statement was signed by Al Wefaq, Wa’ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assemblage, the Nationalist Democratic Society, the Al Ikha’ National Society and the the Al Menbar Progressive Democratic Society.

239. The Al Wefaq members of the Council of Representatives announced their withdrawal from the Council later that night.

240. Throughout the day, numerous incidents of violence against police, security patrols and MoI installations were recorded in various areas, including in the vicinity of the fire department headquarters on the King Faisal Highway and at the Manama police headquarters. Later in the evening, incidents of violence and limited fires were reported in Karbabad, Tubli and Jad Ali.

241. At SMC, medical staff and other individuals began demonstrating in the car park adjacent to the emergency department. Many of those demonstrating were protesting the decision to clear the GCC Roundabout, and were expressing anger at a rumour that had circulated that the SMC administration was preventing ambulances from going to recover persons injured at the roundabout. By 21:00, the number of people gathered at SMC

exceeded 2,500 persons.²⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the Bahrain Teachers' Society issued a call to teachers to participate in a strike outside school premises on 20 February.

242. Following a meeting held in Manama, the GCC Ministers of Foreign Affairs expressed their solidarity with the Kingdom of Bahrain and their support for the measures announced in HM King Hamad's speech of 15 February.

Friday, 18 February 2011

243. The level of violence and the intensity of confrontations between security forces and protesters increased and spread to more parts of Bahrain on 18 February. This was fuelled by heightened public anger over the fatalities of the previous day.

244. The earliest recorded acts of violence on this day occurred at 04:00 in A'Ali, where unidentified persons set fire to lampposts on the Sheikh Zayed Road. Later in the day, barricades made of garbage dumpsters and rocks reportedly blocked numerous streets and alleyways in Al-Deraz. Tyres were burned and used to block traffic on the King Faisal Highway in the vicinity of the Diplomat Hotel, and around 30 individuals set up checkpoints close to the Dairy Queen restaurant in the Al Gufool district. Similar incidents were reported on the King Abdulaziz and Al Budaiya Roads.

245. Earlier that morning, mourners had gathered at the SMC morgue in preparation for the release of the bodies of the individuals killed the previous day. The bodies were released to the families of the victims at 08:20. Later that day, a gathering of almost 1500 people was reported in Daih to commemorate the first fatality of the events, Mr Ali Almeshaima. Around 1000 of those individuals subsequently marched to the Jidhafs cemetery where Mr Almeshaima is buried.

246. At around 09:30, a close associate and adviser to HRH the Crown Prince, Mr Zayed Al-Zayani, met representatives of Al Wefaq including Sheikh Ali Salman in a bid to calm the situation. Mr Zayani informed the Al Wefaq leadership that his aim was to reduce tensions on the streets and to commence discussions with the political parties in the country. He also encouraged Al Wefaq to suspend its calls for a major demonstration scheduled for the next day in order to avoid confrontations with security forces. Sheikh Ali Salman outlined the demands of Al Wefaq relating to the political situation. These demands included organising a meeting between the Crown Prince and the largest opposition political societies with which Al Wefaq was coordinating its positions, including the Wa'ad society. Sheikh Ali Salman also demanded that the Constitution be redrafted to grant the Council of Representatives greater power and that the GoB and opposition agree on a roadmap for solving other political, economic and social problems in Bahrain. He added that Al Wefaq wanted to discuss the modalities of the peaceful

²⁴⁰ See Chapter V.

transfer of power that would eventually lead to an elected Prime Minister within 12-16 years.

247. Meanwhile, the leading Shia cleric in Bahrain, Sheikh Issa Qassim, gave his Friday prayer sermon focusing on the events of the previous day. He condemned the operation to clear the GCC Roundabout and described it as a “premeditated massacre” against “peaceful” demonstrators demanding political reform. Sheikh Issa Qassim declared that the purpose of the operation had been to teach those who were demonstrating a “harsh lesson” and to ensure that the existing political order would not be challenged nor would the Constitution, which had been “forced” upon the people, be revisited. He also rejected the calls of those he described as “loyalist”, who had been encouraging the people to wait for gradual change and reform, and asserted that the state of freedom of expression, social justice and popular participation in government was worsening. He added that the GoB continued to ignore calls for dialogue and he condemned what he considered to be governmental media incitement of sectarian hatred, which he called on the people not to accept.

248. At 11:30, the Crown Prince was briefed about the meeting that had taken place that morning between Mr Al-Zayani and Sheikh Ali Salman. Mr Al-Zayani subsequently contacted Al Wefaq, upon the request of the Crown Prince, to arrange a meeting between the Crown Prince and Sheikh Ali Salman. At 14:30, Mr Al-Zayani received a call from an Al Wefaq representative informing him that they had decided to call off the demonstration that was planned for the next day.

249. That afternoon, protesters marched towards the GCC Roundabout and approached a police barricade that was blocking the King Faisal Highway. A BDF armoured unit was deployed behind the police units to block the entry to the roundabout. Many of those participating in the march had been among the mourners in the funeral processions held earlier that morning. Estimates of the number of people at the march varied between 600 and 1600. Reports also indicated that around seven ambulances accompanied the demonstrators and were driving behind them as they proceeded down the King Faisal Highway towards the GCC Roundabout.

250. By 16:30, a large number of demonstrators began confronting the police units blocking the King Faisal Highway, and this forced the police to withdraw and surrender the location. The demonstrators then removed the police barricades and proceeded towards the BDF units deployed at the entry of the GCC Roundabout. According to government reports, the military personnel deployed in the area were armed with M16 assault rifles, Dilmun rifles and Browning .50 calibre machine guns mounted on top of armoured vehicles.

251. The protesters approached the BDF barricade at approximately 17:00 and demanded access to the roundabout. According to subsequent BDF investigations, the protesters began to verbally abuse the military personnel deployed in the area and to shout anti-government slogans. Reports also indicated that certain individuals among the demonstrators smeared their

bodies with red liquid to feign injuries that could be recorded and subsequently aired on the internet and on satellite news channels. Some government reports claimed that this liquid was blood acquired by demonstrators from the SMC blood bank.

252. The distance between the BDF unit and the demonstrators was estimated to be around 80 metres, at which point the military personnel used a megaphone to instruct the protesters to vacate the area. When the protesters refused to leave, the BDF unit claimed to have fired warning shots in the air using their M16 rifles, Dilmun rifles and Browning .50 calibre machine guns. Demonstrators dispersed for a short period but then regrouped in front of the BDF unit. This sequence of events was repeated at least three times for almost 90 minutes, with BDF units first using a megaphone to instruct the demonstrators to leave and then firing warning shots to disperse the crowd. Thereafter, police were dispatched to the scene to assist the BDF units in clearing the area of demonstrators. Available evidence suggests that police used tear gas and shotguns to disperse the crowd.

253. It was later discovered that one person, Mr Abdul Reda Mohamed Hassan, had sustained a serious gunshot wound to his head during these confrontations. He was immediately taken to SMC for treatment, but was pronounced dead at 13:20 on 21 February.²⁴¹ A number of other demonstrators were also severely injured at the scene. According to medical reports, at least one person sustained gunshot wounds to his chest, while others were injured by shotgun pellets in various parts of their bodies. Some individuals also reported being injured by tear gas canisters.

254. That night, HRH the Crown Prince gave an impromptu interview on national television in which he discussed recent developments and stated the following:

- a. He extends his condolences to the families of those who lost their lives during the confrontations of the previous days.
- b. This is a time for self-restraint to be exercised by the armed forces, police and citizens.
- c. He cares for the dignity of Bahrainis and believes that immediate steps must be taken to rebuild confidence among citizens to avoid slipping into chaos.
- d. He believes that the pace of reform in Bahrain is slow and that this was the cause of the events of the past days.
- e. Dialogue is the best tool to find a solution to the current crisis, and this requires the beginning of an immediate period of calm.
- f. Many countries slipped into civil war because moderates did not stand up and protect stability and social cohesion. “Today Bahrain is split”, and this must be remedied immediately

²⁴¹ The facts of this case are discussed in detail in Chapter VI, Section A.

because it is not acceptable for Bahrainis to confront each other.

- g. The problems that Bahrain is facing are the product of many years and cannot be solved overnight. Therefore, the solution is for Bahrainis of all backgrounds to unite and enter into an immediate dialogue.

255. In a sermon broadcasted that night on the Ahl Albayt television channel, the influential Bahraini Shia cleric and figure Sheikh Hadi Almadrassi, who lives in exile in Iraq, described the ongoing demonstrations in Bahrain as an opportunity for the people to remove a corrupt, oppressive and backward ruling family that had been forcefully ruling Bahrain for almost 250 years. He then outlined the following demands and advice to the people of Bahrain:

- a. Demonstrators should remain steadfast and insist on the removal of the ruling family.
- b. The people should not believe promises from the GoB and should reject HRH the Crown Prince's call for dialogue because the 250-year history of the ruling Al Khalifa family has proven the futility of dialogue.
- c. The military units controlling the GCC Roundabout should withdraw immediately.
- d. The GoB should release the bodies of 35 people who [allegedly] died during the clearing of roundabout.
- e. The only way to achieve the demands of the protesters is to violently confront the ruling family and the GoB because that is the only language that they understand.
- f. The martyrs that have fallen are with the martyrs of the historical Islamic battles of Badr, Ohoud and Karbala [he described the situation in Bahrain as a second Karbala].

256. Later in the evening, HM King Hamad asked HRH the Crown Prince to initiate a dialogue with all political parties in Bahrain. A statement released by the Royal Palace announced that the King had granted the HRH the Crown Prince "all the powers to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of all the gracious citizens of Bahrain." In response, Mr Abdul Jalil Khalil Ibrahim, a leading Al Wefaq member, announced that before accepting any offer of dialogue the GoB must withdraw its troops from the GCC Roundabout and the Council of Ministers must resign.

257. The Bahrain Teachers' Society issued a statement to reaffirm its intention to organise a strike in front of schools on 20 February and to call on parents not to send their children to schools to avoid students being hurt if security forces decided to confront the planned strike.

258. Throughout the night, incidents of assault by unidentified individuals against private citizens were recorded. Cases of vandalism were also reported

in numerous neighbourhoods of Manama and surrounding villages. For example, at 19:30 a group of people entered the Crepes Café on Al Budaiya Road in the Babar district, threatening the customers and ordering them all to leave. Similarly, at 20:00 there were reports that some 40 individuals carrying Molotov cocktails had gathered at the Al-Sater market in the Al Janubiyah district.

259. Meanwhile, a large number of people, estimated to have reached 1,000, gathered at SMC. Many of these individuals had either participated in the earlier march at the GCC Roundabout or were protesting against the use of force against the demonstrators. Many political and societal leaders congregated parking area adjacent to the Accident and Emergency Department at the SMC Emergency Section, where statements were being given about the events of the previous days.²⁴²

260. According to government reports, the contacts that Mr Zayed Al-Zayani had initiated with Al Wefaq earlier that day to arrange a meeting between the Crown Prince and Sheikh Ali Salman continued throughout the day and into the night. Information received by the Crown Prince's advisers indicated that there were ongoing consultations between Al Wefaq and other political societies about whether Sheikh Ali Salman should accept the offer to meet with the Crown Prince, and that some of these societies were objecting to the meeting.

261. At around 23:00, the Crown Prince arrived at the residence of a close associate from where contacts between his advisers and Al Wefaq were ongoing. At 01:00, Mr Al-Zayani proposed to Sheikh Ali Salman that the suggested meeting with the Crown Prince be followed by a Fajr prayer held at roundabout. It was suggested that Sheikh Ali Salman would lead the prayer and the Crown Prince would participate.

262. At around 03:00, a senior Al Wefaq representative met with the Crown Prince and his advisers to request that demonstrators be allowed to return safely to the GCC Roundabout. Despite advice to the contrary, the Crown Prince arranged for troops deployed in the area to be withdrawn and for demonstrators to have access to roundabout, where they would be allowed to stay. This decision was to be in exchange for Al Wefaq agreeing to enter into a dialogue with the GoB. The Crown Prince again reiterated his belief that the GCC Roundabout was not a safe location and that demonstrators should consider moving elsewhere, but he stated that they would nonetheless be granted access to the roundabout. Despite the decision to reopen the roundabout to demonstrators, at 04:00 HRH the Crown Prince was informed that Sheikh Ali Salman had retired for the night and would therefore be unable to meet with him.

263. Opposition sources have, however, provided a slightly different account of the political discussions with HRH the Crown Prince. According to this account, Sheikh Ali Salman would only participate in a proposed televised meeting with the Crown Prince on two conditions. The first was that

²⁴² See Chapter V.

the other opposition societies consent to this meeting, and the second was that HRH the Crown Prince reveal the extent to which he was capable of discussing and agreeing on reform measures. Al Wefaq confirmed that a meeting took place with HRH the Crown Prince and other senior officials during the night of 18 February and the early hours of the next day, but noted that HRH the Crown Prince was not prepared to disclose the ceiling of measures that would be proposed in any future political discussions. According to this account, HRH the Crown Prince suggested that the demonstrators be moved to a location other than the GCC Roundabout, after which the reform demands could be considered gradually.

Saturday, 19 February 2011

264. Bahrain witnessed a relatively calm day in comparison to the previous week. Confrontations between protesters and government security forces were less violent, the GCC Roundabout was reopened to demonstrators and the BDF units deployed in area were withdrawn.

265. SMC was one of the main centres of activity throughout the day. Demonstrators began to assemble at SMC at 07:30 and continued to gather in the car park adjacent to the emergency section until they reached around 1700 people by 10:30. Protesters raised various political slogans and expressed numerous demands during the demonstrations at SMC. Some of these demands related to political and constitutional reform, while others adopted more radical objectives like overthrowing the regime. Furthermore, a number of marches proceeded to and from the GCC Roundabout at various times during the day. In one of these demonstrations, which took place at 21:30, medical staff organised and participated in a march from the GCC Roundabout to SMC. A new medical tent was set up in the roundabout by members of the SMC medical staff.²⁴³

266. Meanwhile, by the early afternoon, a gathering of around 100 people was recorded in the vicinity of the Dana Roundabout in the Sanabis District. The size of this demonstration continued to increase as people from Daih and Jad Hafs arrived in Sanabis until it reached around 250 demonstrators.

267. Similarly, a demonstration of around 600 people was recorded on Suwaifiya Road, which leads to the Manama police headquarters. Police confronted these protesters and dispersed them using the standard procedures of firing tear gas and rubber bullets. A smaller gathering of approximately 200 people was also recorded in the Dar Kulaib district in the area adjacent to the University of Bahrain. Many of these demonstrations and gatherings were organised via internet-based social networking websites such as Twitter and Facebook. In addition, text messages were sent via mobile phone to encourage people to join demonstrations.

268. The main development of the day was the return of demonstrators to the GCC Roundabout. Starting at noon, small groups began approaching the roundabout from various directions in an attempt to re-enter the area, which

²⁴³ See Chapter V.

was still under the control of government security forces. As the numbers of protesters increased, the BDF units deployed at the roundabout were ordered to withdraw. Later, after initially attempting to disperse the growing crowds with tear gas, the remaining police in the area also withdrew, thereby relinquishing control of the roundabout to demonstrators. By 17:00, there were approximately 15,000 demonstrators at the roundabout.

269. The mood inside the roundabout was celebratory. Demonstrators dismantled the barricades and barbed wire fences left by the security forces while also erecting tents and hanging signs outlining their demands. Many people considered the reopening of the GCC Roundabout to be a victory for the protest movement and a demonstration of their ability to compel the GoB to alter its behaviour. People of various political and ideological leanings congregated at the roundabout to express their views on the unfolding situation in Bahrain and the possible solutions to the unrest that the country was witnessing. Most demonstrators vowed to remain at the roundabout until their demands were met.

270. At 16:00, the BDF General Command issued a statement announcing that its armed units that had been deployed in the capital had successfully executed their missions, and that they had been ordered to return to their bases.

271. Meanwhile, at the political level, groups of prominent Sunni figures and business people met with HRH the Crown Prince to share their views about the unfolding situation. Some expressed the view that much ground had been ceded to the demands of the Shia, and that HRH the Crown Prince should take a tougher line with the opposition. Meanwhile, advisers to HRH the Crown Prince were informed that a meeting had been held between the seven main opposition political societies, in which it was decided that no agreement should be reached with the GoB except if unanimously endorsed by all of them. Information also indicated that at least two of those seven opposition groups, Wa'ad and the Shirazi group, had expressed reservations about reaching an agreement with HRH the Crown Prince.

272. The Crown Prince gave an address on Bahrain Television later that evening. He stated that there was a ray of hope on the horizon and expressed his gratitude for those “sage and wise individuals” who had responded positively to the call for calm and national unity that he had issued the night before. He announced that a new era was beginning in which all issues and problems would be discussed openly and honestly. He also reaffirmed the importance of maintaining calm, which was indispensable if all parties were going to present their views in a productive and constructive manner.

273. The Crown Prince also declared that HM King Hamad had issued a decree authorising him to head the national dialogue. Later that night, HRH the Crown Prince assembled a negotiating team, in which he was careful to include Shia, Sunnis and a member of the ruling family.

274. At 21:30, the Secretary General of Al Wefaq, Sheikh Ali Salman, gave a speech at the GCC Roundabout in which he reaffirmed the peaceful

nature of the protests and demanded that the GoB prove its commitment to refrain from clearing out the area by force again. He added that the various political opposition forces and the youth at the roundabout would be prepared to enter into a dialogue with the GoB when the latter had proved its goodwill. Numerous other political figures and community leaders were also present at the roundabout and gave speeches outlining their views about the situation in Bahrain.

275. The GFBTU issued a statement calling for a general strike in Bahrain unless the military was withdrawn and people were allowed to exercise their right to freedom of expression. Later, the GFBTU Assistant Secretary announced that despite the withdrawal of BDF forces from the GCC Roundabout, the union was still proceeding with the planned strike to pressure the GoB into ensuring that demonstrators at the roundabout would not be attacked.

276. Later in the night, HRH the Crown Prince gave an interview on CNN in which he expressed his condolences to the families of those who had lost loved ones. He stated that HM King Hamad had authorised him to lead a national dialogue with all political parties and that he was working to diffuse the situation and rebuild trust between all sides. HRH the Crown Prince noted that the steps taken earlier that day, such as the withdrawal of military units and the reopening of the GCC Roundabout, had been intended to establish trust and confidence between all parties, and he gave his assurance that demonstrators would be allowed to remain at the roundabout. He stated that he considered those protesters to be “a very significant proportion of our society”, but that there were also other forces in society and it would be necessary to build trust between the moderates in order to transcend the crisis. Finally, he expressed his view that the reforms undertaken during the previous ten years were not enough and pledged to undertake greater reform in the future.

Sunday, 20 February 2011

277. The most significant events of the day were the widespread strikes and demonstrations organised by employees in both the public and private sectors. These strikes went ahead despite the announcement by the GFBTU that it had decided to suspend the strike it had called for in light of the GoB’s decision to withdraw the BDF from the streets and reopen the roundabout.

278. While accurate statistics are not available, estimates have suggested that around 80-85% of employees in Bahrain went on strike on 20 February. The first recorded strikes of the day occurred in schools throughout the country. Starting at 07:30, teachers refused to go to work and gathered in front of their school gates. The number of schools witnessing strikes varied in the different governorates. In Muharraq, four schools reported striking teachers. That number rose to eight in Manama, nine in Wusta, and 24 in Shamaliyah.

279. Large numbers of lawyers also went on strike early that morning. They first gathered at the Ministry of Justice and then moved to the GCC

Roundabout by noon. At 13:30, a number of employees of the Bahrain Aluminium Company (ALBA) organised a demonstration on company grounds. Their slogans included calls for constitutional reform, calls to ensure national unity and reject sectarianism, condemnations of the protesters' deaths and, in some case, calls for the removal of the royal family. Later that night, at around 21:00, a march of about 80 people carrying Bahraini flags organised by the Bahrain Engineers' Society proceeded down the Sheikh Ali Salman Road towards the GCC Roundabout.

280. Meanwhile, on the political level, Al Wefaq issued a statement extending its condolences to the families of the victims and condemning what it considered to be the excessive use of force by security forces. The statement also expressed Al Wefaq's full support for the "demands of the people", which included the following:

- a. Establishing a constitutional monarchy in Bahrain and redrafting a "contractual" constitution that vests power in the people.
- b. Ensuring that the GoB is freely and directly elected by the people.
- c. Holding those implicated in the injuring or killing of innocent protesters accountable.
- d. Resolving contentious political and social problems that have been the subject of popular demands for over 10 years, primary among which is the demand to establish a fully empowered parliament, vesting municipal councils with greater powers, redistributing electoral districts, halting embezzlement of public funds and returning money that has been misappropriated.

281. Later that day, a coalition of seven opposition political societies issued a joint statement outlining their demands. These societies were: Al Wefaq, Wa'ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assembly, the Nationalist Democratic Society, the Al Ikha' National Society and the Al Menbar Progressive Democratic Society. The statement included the following:

- a. Saluting the steadfastness of the youth of 14 February in confronting the "massacres" committed by security forces at the GCC Roundabout.
- b. Extending condolences to the families and loved ones of the martyrs who lost their lives in the previous days.
- c. Calling on the GoB to take more positive measures that are necessary for the commencement of national dialogue.
- d. Demanding the cessation of "incitement to sectarian hatred" in the official government media.
- e. Calling for the immediate release of all political detainees.

- f. Reaffirming commitment to consulting with all political parties and forces that are active on the political scene, including the youth movements that led the 14 February movement.

282. At SMC, members of the medical staff and other individuals participated in a march on the hospital grounds. Their slogans included demands for constitutional reform, social justice and economic equality, and expressions of support for the demands of the 14 February movement.²⁴⁴ Three tents were erected and a podium was set up from which speeches were given about the ongoing situation in Bahrain. At around 15:20, around 700 people marched from the hospital grounds towards the GCC Roundabout.

283. Demonstrations and gatherings of people were recorded throughout the day in various parts of Bahrain. Many of those demonstrations proceeded towards the GCC Roundabout. For example, at 16:40 a demonstration of around 100 people began in the Al-Mekhraka district and advanced towards the roundabout. A smaller demonstration, estimated to be around 70 people, proceeded at 21:50 from Imam Hussein Street to the roundabout. It is estimated that the number of demonstrators at the roundabout reached 15,000 during the day.

284. The views expressed at the GCC Roundabout were varied and reflected the range of positions and opinions on the Bahrain political spectrum. Leaders of diverse ideological backgrounds and political affiliations participated in these protests and articulated different demands and measures to solve the unfolding crisis. For some, the demonstrations aimed to apply pressure on the GoB to take bolder steps towards constitutional reform that would open the door for greater popular participation in the governance of the country. Others expressed grievances of a socio-economic nature such as income disparities, lack of employment opportunities, claims of sect-based discrimination in hiring policies, the unavailability and inadequacy of government housing and the lack of access to public land. Some expressed more radical views. Many raised the slogan “the people want to remove the regime”, which had been a prominent rallying call during the mass uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. Others went further and specifically named the ruling family, raising slogans such as “death to Al Khalifa” or “down with Al Khalifa”.

285. Despite the generally peaceful nature of most demonstrations and the limited number of clashes with security forces on this day, acts of violence were reported at a number of locations. For example, reports indicated that unidentified individuals assaulted bystanders in the vicinity Al-Dawar Al-‘Awal in Madinet Hamad. Later that night, one National Guard soldier was reported to have been assaulted in Dar Kulaib, while a civilian claimed to have sustained a head injury due to a rock thrown at him in the vicinity of the GCC Roundabout.

Monday, 21 February 2011

²⁴⁴ See Chapter V.

286. Demonstrations and protests continued throughout this day in various parts of Bahrain, including at the GCC Roundabout. The most distinctive feature of the day's events was the organisation of a mass rally in support of the ruling family.

287. The earliest recorded demonstrations were in Sanabis, where 100 people gathered at the Dana Roundabout at 10:30 and marched down Road 28 towards the GCC Roundabout, by which time the group had grown to around 500 people. Later that day, also at the Dana Roundabout, a group of around 150 sportsmen gathered to participate in the demonstrations. A smaller group of protesters gathered at the Manama Municipal Council building. Meanwhile, a group of around 100 seamen gathered at the Ajam Grand Ma'tam at 15:30 and then marched, first towards the fish market where an address was delivered, and then onwards to the GCC Roundabout. Later in the afternoon, a large group of around 2000 people marched to the Sitra cemetery to commemorate those who had lost their lives during the confrontations of the earlier days, while at 16:30 a smaller group of protesters gathered at the main roundabout in Karzakan.

288. At SMC, protesters erected tents and platforms in the parking lot adjacent to the emergency department. Political figures, opposition leaders and members of the medical staff gave speeches from the platform at different times during the day. By 15:00, the number of people at SMC was estimated to have reached 300.²⁴⁵

289. By the early evening, a number of protest marches left from various parts of Manama and headed towards the GCC Roundabout. One march with around 100 people left the vicinity of Al-Sadeq mosque at 18:40, while a much larger march with almost 3000 protesters left the Daih district at 19:30.

290. By late afternoon, groups of protesters began to gather at the Al-Fateh Mosque in a large demonstration that attempted to provide an alternative forum to the GCC Roundabout, and to elaborate a relatively moderate set of reform demands. The number of people was reported to have exceeded 100,000 by 19:30. According to MoI and some media, by 20:30 the number of people participating in this demonstration increased to 400,000, although many other estimates place the number at below 120,000, some of whom were non-residents of Bahrain.

291. The demonstration began with a prayer led by Sheikh Abdullatif Al-Mahmoud, who then announced the establishment of an unofficial group called the "The Gathering of National Unity". He read out the group's first communiqué, which included the following:

- a. The Gathering of National Unity was established by a group of religious and public figures to provide a platform for those in society who have no political or institutional affiliation to express their opinion.

²⁴⁵ See Chapter V.

- b. It affirms the legitimacy of the existing regime and considers that the maintenance of stability in the country is not negotiable.
- c. It expresses its deep sorrow and regret at the deaths that occurred during the previous days.
- d. It calls on all people to maintain calm and affirms that demands for reform can only be implemented on the basis of a national consensus.
- e. It calls on the people of Bahrain to beware of civil discord.
- f. To the Shia of Bahrain, including those demonstrating at the GCC Roundabout, the Gathering affirms the unity of the Bahraini people who share the same grievances, problems and challenges. The Gathering also “extends its hand” to those at the roundabout to cooperate in the pursuit of virtue.
- g. To the Sunnis of Bahrain, the Gathering affirms that it will respond to those espousing opposing views with logic and reason.
- h. To the leadership of the country, the Gathering asserts that the Bahraini people are demanding their rights, in particular that authority should be vested in the people in reality and not only as a façade, and that rights enshrined in the Constitution should not be ignored. The Gathering also calls on the country’s leadership to remove all forms of ethnic, sectarian, familial or class-based discrimination, and to ensure that responsibilities are given to those in society who are uncorrupted and have the requisite expertise, since much wealth has already been misappropriated. The Gathering also encourages the leadership to undertake fundamental and balanced revisions of the Constitution to ensure that the people are the sources of authority under the kind custodianship of the King.

292. Despite the fact that this gathering was not authorised, there was no record of attempts by the police or government security services to disperse the crowds gathered at the Al-Fateh Mosque. Later, small rallies described as supportive of the King and the GoB were reported in the Sheikh Issa bin Salman Road and the King Faisal Highway. No information is available regarding any attempts to confront or disperse these unauthorised demonstrations.

293. Later that night, the Bahrain International Circuit announced that the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix race, which was scheduled for 13 March 2011, would not be held due to the unrest in Bahrain.

294. HRH the Crown Prince received representatives from civil society in his efforts to calm the situation. These meetings also aimed at preparing the ground for the proposed national dialogue.

Tuesday, 22 February 2011

295. The most significant event of the day was the organisation of a mass rally dubbed the “Martyrs’ March” in honour of the victims who had lost their lives in the protests. The first people to attend this demonstration started gathering at 07:40 to join the funeral procession of Mr Abdul Reda Hassan, who had been severely injured on 18 February and pronounced dead on 21 February. Some reports stated that the number of people participating in the funeral procession exceeded 9000. The mourners were divided into two groups; the first was in the vicinity of Roundabout 13 in Hamad Town, while the second was adjacent to the Om Albaneen Mosque in the Al-Malekya district.

296. The number of demonstrators participating in the Martyrs’ March continued to grow, until by many accounts more than 100,000 people were marching down Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Road towards the GCC Roundabout. During the demonstration, many protesters chanted, “The people demand the removal of the regime”, and asserted their unwavering commitment to achieving the objectives for which the martyrs had given their lives. Some protesters also called for the resignation of the Prime Minister, the rewriting of the Constitution, radical social and economic reforms and efforts to hold those implicated in the killing of protesters accountable. Demonstrators also chanted slogans rejecting sectarianism, affirming national unity and avowing their loyalty to Bahrain.

297. It is estimated that the number of demonstrators at the GCC Roundabout reached its highest level on this day, especially after the Martyrs’ March entered the area. Estimates place the number of people present at more than 150,000.

298. During the day, small numbers of police and employees of other government services, including the fire department, joined the demonstrators at the GCC Roundabout in their official uniforms. Some of these government employees gave short speeches at the roundabout expressing their support for the demands raised by the demonstrators.

299. Throughout the day, HRH the Crown Prince held political discussions about the ongoing situation in Bahrain, including meeting with a delegation of Kuwaiti figures who were considered to be possible mediators between the GoB and the opposition because of their experience in dealing with the Shia opposition in Kuwait. HRH the Crown Prince also met with various cabinet ministers and Members of Parliament. In a bid to build confidence between the GoB and the opposition, HRH the Crown Prince made the following two recommendations to HM King Hamad: that a pardon be granted to a group of high profile political leaders who had been accused of attempting to overthrow the regime in 2010; and that a number of cabinet ministers who had been subject to criticism by the opposition be replaced. During subsequent discussions, Al Wefaq was asked to reciprocate these gestures of goodwill that the GoB had made towards the opposition. Al Wefaq’s leadership declined, however, to make any political concessions, citing their inability to control the streets.

300. During subsequent discussions, Al Wefaq was asked to reciprocate these gestures of goodwill that the GoB had made towards the opposition. Al Wefaq's leadership declined, however, to make any political concessions, citing their inability to control the streets.

301. Later that night, it was announced that HM King Hamad had pardoned 308 individuals who had been convicted of various crimes relating to state security. Among those pardoned were leading opposition figures, including the Secretary General of the Al-Haq Movement for Liberty and Democracy, Mr Hassan Meshima, who had been living in London. The royal pardon allowed him to return to Bahrain. Among the other political figures released were Dr Abduljalil Alsankis and Sheikh Mohamed Habib Alsafaf (also known as Almekdad).

Wednesday, 23 February 2011

302. Demonstrations continued at the GCC Roundabout on 23 February. Early in the morning, many of the political opposition leaders who had been released by royal pardon the previous day went to the roundabout to celebrate their release and express their support of the ongoing demonstrations. They gave speeches at the roundabout in which they outlined their positions and views regarding the unfolding situation in Bahrain.

303. Meanwhile, a large demonstration was organised at the headquarters of the CID to demand the release of other prisoners who had not been included in the royal pardon. The demonstrators, among whom was Sheikh Mohamed Habib Alsafaf, raised slogans including, "The people demand the removal of the regime", "Step down Hamad", and, "Down with the GoB". They also expressed their rejection of calls for dialogue before the regime was removed. Many of the protesters also demanded an end to impunity, and specifically called for the prosecution of those responsible for the killing of protesters and of security personnel who were alleged to have engaged in torture during the civil disturbances of the mid-1990s. At the end of the demonstration, the protesters marched towards the GCC Roundabout.

304. Smaller demonstrations and gatherings were recorded in other areas of Manama, most of which proceeded towards the GCC Roundabout. For example, at 10:20 a group of demonstrators, mostly students, reportedly gathered on Road 28 in the Sanabis district and then marched to roundabout. Later in the day, a procession of more than 2000 people was reported to have begun in the vicinity of the Al-Jamal mosque in the Al-Balad Al-Qadeem district and moved towards the GCC Roundabout at 15:00.

305. As the number of protesters at the roundabout increased, many of the leading opposition figures gave speeches. For example, Mr Abdulwahab Hussein gave a speech in which he identified two main demands of the protesters; the first was the removal of the regime, while the second was the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. He affirmed that the removal of the regime was an attainable goal, and that establishing a constitutional monarchy would remain impossible without first removing the regime. Mr. Hussein also stated that if political societies entered into a dialogue with the

GoB, this would undermine the existing “revolutionary momentum” and would allow the GoB to impose its will on the people by using tools like the military, the National Guard and the police. He warned against pro-government political forces that would work to moderate the demands of the opposition if a dialogue were held. Mr Hussein concluded his statement by calling for national unity and rejecting sectarianism. Other figures and leaders who gave statements at the roundabout during the day included Dr Abduljalil Alsankis, Mr Samy Siyady of the Wa’ad movement, Mr Abdulla Saleh of the Islamic Action Society and Mr Mohamed Habib Alsafaf.

Thursday, 24 February 2011

306. Demonstrations continued at the GCC Roundabout and other areas of Bahrain throughout the day. One of the earliest recorded protests of the day was at 09:00 when a group of 150-200 people gathered at the gates of the Municipalities Ministry and then moved to the roundabout. Later in the day, a rally of around 150 women began at the Dana Roundabout and proceeded towards the GCC Roundabout. At 20:16, a group of postal workers gathered in the vicinity of the Lulu Centre and marched towards the GCC Roundabout.

307. At SMC, people continued to gather in the parking area adjacent to the Emergency Section. At 15:30, a march departed from SMC towards the GCC Roundabout which included some medical personnel and other individuals.

308. In a bid to support the ongoing political discussions between the GoB and opposition parties, the Bureau of the Council of Representatives encouraged the Al Wefaq members of Parliament to withdraw their resignations from the National Assembly.

309. Meanwhile, the Bahrain Teachers’ Society announced that it was suspending the strike it had called for in Bahraini schools.

310. The Royal Diwan announced that the next day, Friday 25 February, would be a day of mourning for those who had lost their lives during the events of the past weeks in Bahrain.

311. Al Wefaq Secretary General Sheikh Ali Salman gave a speech at the GCC Roundabout that night in which he mentioned the following points:

- a. When we elect our government, we will respect the GCC member States, other neighbouring countries, and we will uphold all of Bahrain’s international treaty obligations.
- b. We are prepared to stay for another week, month, two months, or even three, until we are granted the right to choose our own government.
- c. We reject sectarianism, and reaffirm that Shia and Sunnis are united in the demands of this movement. We will also rise above those who are trying to personalise the issues. We will remain peaceful in our protests, because we have learnt from Jesus Christ that love defeats hatred, and we will continue

until we are granted the right to elect and dismiss our own government.

Friday, 25 February 2011

312. A day of national mourning was declared by the GoB in remembrance of those who had died during the confrontations.

313. As is generally the case on Fridays, more protests were organised on 25 February than on previous days, and the protests were generally more widely dispersed in the various parts of Manama and its surrounding villages. Although demonstrations on Fridays usually begin after Friday prayers, groups of people were reported to have gathered outside the emergency department of SMC at 07:00.

314. During his Friday prayer sermon, Sheikh Ali Salman, the Secretary General of Al Wefaq, commended the people of Bahrain for maintaining the peaceful nature of their protests and avoiding confrontations with police forces. He also encouraged demonstrators to remain peaceful and stated that this would bring them closer to achieving their aspiration of a democratic and civil society in which the people are vested with authority.

315. Large numbers of demonstrators emerged from Friday prayers and immediately joined protest marches, many of which headed to the GCC Roundabout. One of the largest of these marches proceeded down the King Faisal Highway in the direction of the roundabout. Demonstrators chanted various slogans, including, “The people demand the removal of the regime”, and, “*Erhal...erhal*” (“Leave...leave”), which was usually directed at either the regime or the monarch. Some demonstrators also chanted, “The people demand the removal of the King”. There were also banners rejecting any form of dialogue. In addition, some demonstrators denounced Bahrain Television for airing what they considered to be inflammatory programmes that incite to sectarianism.

316. Other demonstrations were reported in various parts of Manama and neighbouring villages. One of these demonstrations began at 14:00 and included around 1200 individuals who proceeded towards the Hawaj Stores in the Al Gufool district. Meanwhile, over 1500 protesters joined a march in the areas of Al-Mahooz and Al-Saqya. At 16:30, a number of police participated in a march that was heading down the Shikh Khalifa bin Salman Road towards the GCC Roundabout.

317. Throughout the day and into the evening, people of various political affiliations and social background flocked to the GCC Roundabout, where community leaders and political figures were giving speeches from the stages that had been erected. Among the prominent figures who gave speeches were Dr Abduljalil Alsankis and Mr Mohamed Habib Alsafaf.

318. Four political societies (the Constitutional Rally Society, the Islamic Unity Society, the National Action Charter Society and the National Free Thought Society) met at the National Action Charter Society’s headquarters. These groups decided to form the “National Coalition” which, among other

things, declared its support for HRH the Crown Prince's initiative for dialogue. The National Coalition called for everyone to participate in these discussions and asked that no group be excluded.

319. Isolated incidents of violence were reported in various areas of Manama, including in the Sheikh Hamad Street where a tyre was burned and placed in the middle of the street. A group of unidentified individuals disrupted traffic in the Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Road in Manama, while another group set up a checkpoint in the area adjacent to the City Centre Mall and on top of the overpass adjacent to the GCC Roundabout.

320. The Bahrain Teachers' Society issued a statement expressing gratitude to the teachers who had participated in what was described as the "largest and most daring" strike in Bahrain's history, which had "paralysed the Ministry of Education" and aimed at supporting the demonstrators who were protesting the "barbaric practices of the authorities". The Society also thanked teachers for their return to their jobs at the end of the strike, which undercut attempts by the Ministry of Education to take retributive measures against them. The statement condemned the decision of the Ministry to hire temporary teachers to replace those who went on strike, and denounced plans to offer permanent contracts to some of those teachers even though they were unqualified.

321. A limited government reshuffle was announced later that afternoon. The following four cabinet ministers, who were generally disfavoured by the opposition, were replaced: the Minister of Health; the Minister for Housing; the Minister for Electricity and Water Affairs; and the Minister for the Council of Ministers' Affairs. The latter minister, Sheikh Ahmed Al Khalifa, had come under particularly strong criticism in recent years since the "Bandar Report" scandal broke out in 2006.

Saturday, 26 February 2011

322. Two significant events marked this day. First, the prominent opposition figure and Secretary General of the Haq movement, Mr Hassan Almeshaima, returned from exile. Second, there was a major rally in the vicinity of the Council of Ministers.

323. The day began with limited protests recorded in various parts of Manama, including a procession of around 50 motorcycles that began in the Abou Seeba' District and then headed towards the GCC Roundabout.

324. At 15:00, Mr Hassan Almeshaima arrived at the Bahrain International Airport coming from Beirut. He was received by family members, journalists and news correspondents. Reports at the time claimed that Mr Almeshaima had flown from London to Beirut to pay his respects to the family of a deceased friend. According to subsequent government reports, however, the purpose of this visit was to consult with the Hezbollah leadership in Lebanon about the situation in Bahrain.

325. Meanwhile, a large demonstration headed from the GCC Roundabout down the King Faisal Highway and reached the building housing the Council

of Ministers. Among the leaders of the demonstration was Mr Mohamed Habib Alsafaf, who was joined by Shia clerics and other political opposition figures. The protest then continued down the King Faisal Highway until it reached Bab Al Bahrain.

326. The protesters' demands had increased significantly since earlier demonstrations, especially those organised before the clearing of the GCC Roundabout on 17 February. Many demonstrators were no longer demanding mere changes to the Constitution, increased powers for Parliament or greater social and economic equality. Rather, the protesters were now almost unified in chanting, "The people demand the removal of the regime", which had been a prominent cry in other Arab countries that experienced mass protests, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Syria. Many protesters also directed their chants and slogans at HM King Hamad by chanting, "Down...down...Hamad", and, "Leave...leave", in reference to the monarch. In addition, while they were demonstrating outside the office of the Council of Ministers, many protesters rejected the limited cabinet reshuffle that had been announced the day before and which they considered insufficient and designed merely to placate public anger. The demonstrators openly demanded the resignation of the Prime Minister and the entire cabinet, and threatened further escalation by marching towards other areas of the capital. Other protesters lifted pictures of the martyrs who had died in clashes with security forces, and expressed their resolve to achieve the objectives for which the martyrs had died. A few of the demonstrators carried pictures of Mr Hassan Almeshaima, who was known to be arriving that day in Bahrain.

327. Many of the protesters carried flowers as a symbol of their peacefulness. This practice continued in many of the demonstrations during the following weeks.

328. As the afternoon proceeded, demonstrators returned to the GCC Roundabout where speeches were being given by political leaders of various affiliations. Among those speaking that day were Sheikh Ali Salman, Sheikh Hassan Aldehieh and Mr Mohamed Habib Alsafaf. Others present included Dr Abduljalil Alsankis, Mr Hussein Alakraf and Sheikh Saeed Alnoury.

329. Meanwhile, the GoB and Al Wefaq continued to discuss the modalities of the national dialogue and the steps needed to initiate it. Mr Zayed Al-Zayani, an adviser to HRH the Crown Prince, held a meeting with Sheikh Ali Salman during which the latter offered the following points as a framework for dialogue: (i) a democratic system that would guarantee that neither sect would oppress the other; (ii) an elected and fully empowered government which reflected the principle that the people were the source of authority; and (iii) an elected parliament with full legislative powers. According to the representatives of HRH the Crown Prince, when Al Wefaq was asked what it was willing to concede in return for government concessions on these issues, Sheikh Ali Salman asserted that Al Wefaq could clear 90% of the GCC Roundabout and that they could change the slogans chanted in demonstrations from "down with the regime" to "reform the regime". This came as a surprise to the representatives of HRH the Crown

Prince, since Al Wefaq had claimed during earlier discussions that they had lost control of the streets.

330. During these discussions, Al Wefaq expressed discontent with what they considered to be the biased coverage of the unfolding situation by Bahrain Television. Mr Al-Zayani agreed, but noted that other channels on which Al Wefaq members appeared, such as Al-Manar, Al-Alam and PressTV, were also one-sided. In response, Sheikh Ali Salman noted that Al Wefaq members had resorted to those channels because they were not granted access to Bahrain Television.

331. At 22:00, Mr Hassan Almeshaima arrived at the GCC Roundabout where he was enthusiastically welcomed by the demonstrators. He gave a short speech in which he commended the protesters for having mastered the techniques of peaceful civil disobedience and encouraged them to learn from the Egyptian experience how to escalate their demonstrations to increase pressure on the GoB. Mr Almeshaima told protesters that they should exploit the international media spotlight that was focused on Bahrain, and congratulated them for their perseverance for the cause of freedom, which had earned them the respect of international public opinion. He also encouraged them to take further escalatory steps as long as they remained peaceful in nature. Mr Almeshaima concluded his statement by reaffirming the importance of maintaining national unity and rejecting calls for sectarianism and civil discord because, in his view, the entire people of Bahrain were in “one trench” against an oppressive regime.

Sunday, 27 February 2011

332. Demonstrations of various sizes continued throughout the day. The most notable developments were the participation of large numbers of school students in protests and a demonstration using a convoy of trucks on one of the main highways of Manama.

333. Early in the morning, large numbers of students were reported to have organised processions in the vicinity of their schools. According to some estimates, 10 students demonstrated in the Al-Hokoma Road and around 40 students protested in Road 28 in Sanabis. Simultaneously, a larger gathering of around 100 students from the Al-Naim High School in the Al-Salmaniya district was reported. At around noon, approximately 150 students from the Sar Girl’s High School were reported to have organised a demonstration on school grounds.

334. At around 16:00, a large demonstration of over 2000 people moved from the GCC Roundabout towards the King Faisal Highway. A number of political figures attended the demonstration, which, like the demonstrations of the previous day, was dominated by calls for the removal of the regime. Demonstrators held large banners, one of which stated, “Shocking! The army kills the citizens”, while another stated, “The square of martyrdom is the symbol of bravery and pride”. Other demonstrators demanded the immediate release of political prisoners, the resignation of the Prime Minister and the

cabinet, rejection of calls for political dialogue and a promise of further escalation until the regime was removed.

335. Starting in the early afternoon, a large number of trucks of various sizes began to gather in the Salmabad district. These trucks then drove as a convoy towards the GCC Roundabout and its vicinity. By 17:00, the convoy had reached parts of the diplomatic area, passed by the offices of the Council of Ministers and driven down the Khalifa bin Salman Road. Estimates placed the number of trucks participating in this demonstration at over 100.

336. At SMC, a demonstration of over 100 people, including some members of the medical staff, was organised. It proceeded towards the GCC Roundabout.

337. The 18 Al Wefaq members of the Council of Representatives submitted a joint “final” resignation to the President of the Council, Mr Khalifa Ahmed Al-Dahrani.

338. Meanwhile, following discussions concerning the biased coverage of the ongoing events by Bahraini Television, the President of the Information Affairs Authority, Sheikh Fawaz bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, agreed to air a programme that would host Al Wefaq representatives. However, Al Wefaq declined this opportunity. Later that day, 40 political societies, community leaders and social organisations were invited to attend the national dialogue initiated by HRH the Crown Prince. Official letters were sent to organisations, while individual figures were invited by telephone. All parties and individuals invited accepted the invitation during the next three to five days. The response from six of the major opposition political societies, including Al Wefaq, arrived on 3 March 2011 (see below).

339. No invitations were extended to unregistered political societies such as the Haq and Wafa’a opposition movements.

340. Throughout the day, HRH the Crown Prince held consultative meetings with groups and prominent Bahrainis, including business persons and civil society leaders. During these meetings, participants, especially from civil society, called for reforms to ensure that employment policies were based on merit rather than nepotism and that steps were undertaken to make the political system more just. Demands were also made to form a committee to amend the Constitution. Representatives of the Shia Ajam community held a meeting with HRH the Crown Prince to reaffirm their loyalty to the monarchy and to urge that they be represented in future parliaments.

341. Later that evening, a senior Al Wefaq met with HRH the Crown Prince at HRH the Crown Prince’s Court. During the meeting, Al Wefaq was encouraged to join the national dialogue.

Monday, 28 February 2011

342. In a continuation of the previous day’s demonstrations, hundreds of students participated in protests in various parts of Bahrain. Another convoy of heavy vehicles was organised as part of the ongoing protests.

343. Between 07:30 and 08:30, around 400 students left their schools in different areas and marched through the main access roads in their neighbourhoods. Among the schools in which students participating in these protests were enrolled were the Ahmed Alomran Commercial High School for Boys, the Jad Hafs Industrial High School for Boys and the Al-Jabreya Industrial High School for Boys. Later in the morning, at around 10:20, approximately 400-500 University of Bahrain students joined students from the Abdulla bin Issa School in a demonstration in the vicinity of the Ministry of Education. More people subsequently joined this protest, including teachers and parents who demanded the removal of the Minister of Education for what they considered to be the poor quality of education in Bahrain. Many teachers also protested the hiring of temporary teachers during the strike that had been called for by the Bahrain Teachers' Society. In addition to these demands, which specifically related to the educational sector, many demonstrators raised slogans similar to those in other areas of Bahrain, such as demands for the removal of the regime and condemnation of the use of force against peaceful protesters. Later that night, another demonstration of over 100 school students took place at the GCC Roundabout.

344. One of the important developments of this day was the holding of a demonstration in front of the Bahrain National Assembly. At 09:00, demonstrators used large buses and some trucks to move from the GCC Roundabout towards the National Assembly in the Qodaibeya district. By 09:30, almost 1000 people had gathered at the Bahraini legislature, where they repeated many of the slogans and demands that had been raised in different parts of the country during the previous days, such as calling for the removal of the regime and rejecting any political dialogue before the regime was removed. Other protesters accused HM King Hamad of violating the basic human rights of Bahrainis and ordering the killing of innocent demonstrators. Later, some of the demonstrators formed a human chain around the legislature.

345. It was reported that at 10:00 a convoy of buses was being driven towards the Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman road. The convoy stopped in the vicinity of the Burger Land overpass and then continued towards Manama. This "slowdown" convoy was composed of over 200 buses.

346. This day also witnessed a demonstration by a group of journalists and other persons working in the media. This protest began at the King Faisal Highway and then headed to the GCC Roundabout, where demonstrators expressed their support for and solidarity with the demonstrators at the roundabout, and rejected government attempts to restrict and control coverage of the events in Bahrain. The participants in this protest also denounced any form of harassment or arrest of journalists. Some of the protesting journalists criticised the performance of Bahraini television, which they considered biased and unprofessional.

347. The President of the Council of Representatives, Mr Khalifa Al-Dahrani, invited Al Wefaq members of the Council to attend a meeting to discuss the question of their resignations. Al Wefaq declined the invitation.

348. Later that day, senior Al Wefaq members briefed Mr Zayed Al-Zayani, the representative of HRH the Crown Prince, on discussions that had taken place among the society's leadership. A senior Shia cleric also attended the meeting. The Al Wefaq leaders, who included Secretary General Sheikh Ali Salman, reported that they had agreed upon the following demands: (i) that the Constitution be rewritten by a specially elected committee; (ii) that employment be based on merit rather than personal connections; (iii) that steps be taken to establish a more just political system; and (iv) that religion play no role in politics. The Al Wefaq leaders explained that the expectations of the youth had risen, which meant that the ceiling for demands had risen. Therefore, Al Wefaq would now call for the drafting of a new constitution and not just amendment of the 2002 Constitution.

349. That night, at around 20:30, the Bahrain Medical Society held a meeting at which a representative of the Wa'ad political society gave a statement and proposed calling for a nationwide civil disobedience campaign.

Tuesday, 1 March 2011

350. There were two major developments on this day. First, larger student demonstrations were reported throughout the day, many of which headed towards the GCC Roundabout. Second, the protests extended from the roundabout to the nearby Financial Harbour of Bahrain.

351. Starting at 07:00 and continuing until the early afternoon, students in numerous neighbourhoods left their schools and organised marches many of which ended up at the GCC Roundabout. By 08:00, no fewer than 1,000 students had joined these demonstrations in areas including Issa Town, Hamad Town, Alnaeem, Bu Ghazal, Gabalet Habashy and Manama. Meanwhile, another group of over 800 students headed towards the Ministry of Education where they organised a sit-in at the gates of the Ministry.

352. The demands expressed at these student demonstrations echoed those raised during earlier student protests. Many participants called for the removal of the Minister of Education, while others chanted more political slogans, including the call to remove the regime and the demand that the Prime Minister resign from office. Many protesters also rejected sectarianism and affirmed their commitment to national unity.

353. Starting at 14:00, a large march began in the Qofool district, organised by the following major opposition political societies: Al Wefaq, Wa'ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assembly, the Nationalist Democratic Society, Al-Ikha' National Society and the Al-Menbar Progressive Democratic Society. The march headed towards the GCC Roundabout and continued to grow until the number of participants was estimated to have exceeded 12,000. A procession of disabled persons also joined the demonstration to express their support for the protesters at the GCC Roundabout. The demands expressed during this demonstration were similar to those seen in the protests of the previous days. People called for the removal of the regime, rejected any political dialogue with the GoB before the regime was removed, condemned the use of force against protesters and

demanded the release of political prisoners who were still detained, including Mr Mohamed Al-Bouflasa. Many participants also denounced what they considered to be the biased and pro-government coverage of the unfolding events by Bahrain Television. After the demonstration, the organising political societies issued a joint statement expressing gratitude to the people who had participated and announcing that they would hold a mass rally the following Friday under the title “Down with the GoB”.

354. Later that evening, at around 18:00, Mr Hassan Almeshaima participated in a protest in the car park adjacent to the entrance to the Emergency Section at SMC. Participants erected a number of tents offering refreshments and set up a stage from which Mr Almeshaima and others, including Mr Abduljalil Khalil, gave statements about the ongoing situation in Bahrain.

355. At 21:00, groups of protesters began to move from the GCC Roundabout towards the nearby Bahrain Financial Harbour, which includes a number of modern high-rise buildings that house international consulting companies and financial services firms. Protesters set up small tents in the vicinity of the harbour and began demonstrating at traffic junctures in the area. Political leaders, including Dr Abduljalil Alsankis, joined the protesters at the harbour later in the evening. By midnight, however, Sheikh Mohamed Habib Alsafaf met with the protesters and convinced them to vacate the area and to return to the GCC Roundabout.

356. During the day, Al Wefaq issued a paper entitled, “A Vision for the Political Crisis in Bahrain”. The document included the following points:

- a. The ongoing crisis is a political conflict, and not a sectarian conflict. It has no relation to religion, sect or ethnicity. It is a conflict between those who want to monopolise power and those who want the people to participate in governance by deciding the nature of the government and choosing their Prime Minister, which would allow the people to hold those in government accountable.
- b. The ruling authority is using sectarianism to protect its political interests.
- c. The other problems relating to economic life, human rights and living standards all stem from the original political problems.
- d. Al Wefaq does not aspire to create a theocracy, but aims to establish a civil State in Bahrain in which the people are able to freely choose their government.
- e. The roadmap to a solution should be based on the abrogation of the 2002 Constitution, the cancellation of the electoral system and the election of a Constituent Assembly on the basis of a single electoral district that encompasses the entire country. These elections should be held under the supervision

of a national commission and in the presence of international observers.

- f. The basic principles of this solution are as follows:
- i. Electoral districts should not be designed in a manner that disadvantages one particular group.
 - ii. The interests of all parties should be taken into consideration so that the new constitutional order satisfies the aspirations of the people of Bahrain to have an elected government and a fully empowered parliament. The elected house of parliament should enjoy exclusive legislative and oversight powers, and should not share those powers with either the executive or an unelected chamber of parliament.
 - iii. The family should not be allowed, as is currently the case, to monopolise the affairs of the State, nor should the Shia or the Sunnis. The new constitutional order should be based on a consensus, requiring a majority of votes for approval.
 - iv. This is not a solution for today or tomorrow, but a long-term solution that can achieve true stability so that the country does not relapse into a crisis.
 - v. Any solution must be based on the principles of justice, equity, equality and responsible government, within an environment of a free media and the freedom of association.
 - vi. Al Wefaq will reject any solution that does not satisfy the aspirations of the Sunnis. Similarly, Al Wefaq will reject any solution that does not satisfy the aspirations of the Shia. What is needed is a Bahrain in which all people can live in harmony and tolerance, and the human dignity of all Bahrainis is respected.

357. Opposition sources have indicated that another document was also issued outlining the opposition's proposals for a solution to the unfolding situation in Bahrain. This document, which was entitled "The Roadmap for the Constitutional Exit from the Political Crisis", included the following points:

- a. The roadmap is a constitutional exit from the political crisis within the framework of a national dialogue, without engaging in other political affairs, which represents a suitable ground for dialogue.
- b. The King is to issue a constitutional proclamation by a Royal Order. This proclamation should stipulate the following:
 - i. The cancellation of the 2002 Constitution.

- ii. The cancellation of the electoral districts law.
- iii. The formation of a transitional government composed of representatives from across the political spectrum and technocrats who enjoy the confidence and acceptance of the people, and who are known for being free from corruption and unstained by the blood of the people.
- iv. The constitutional proclamation should stipulate that a Constituent Assembly should be elected within 45 days. To ensure that it fairly represents the people, the members of this assembly should be chosen by an election for which all of Bahrain is a single electoral district.
- v. This assembly shall draft a new constitution, which shall be adopted in its entirety by a 3/5 majority of the assembly. The constitution shall include the following principles:
 1. The King shall be from the Al Khalifa family, who shall reign but not rule over a genuine democratic constitutional monarchy.
 2. Governance is by the people, and shall be exercised through a democratically elected government.
 3. A freely elected legislative council shall have exclusive legislative, financial and oversight powers.
 4. The judicial branch of government shall be fully independent from all other authorities.
- vi. The Constituent Assembly shall also adopt the Political Rights Law and the provisions governing the electoral process.
- vii. The Constituent Assembly shall draft the constitution and other laws that are necessary for constitutional life within four months.
- viii. The constitution shall be applicable once approved by the Constituent Assembly. The branches of government shall be restructured in accordance with the new constitution within 9 months.
- ix. During the transition period, no laws or decree laws shall be issued, except if necessary. The Constituent Assembly shall determine with a 2/3 majority that this situation necessitates the issuing of such laws or decree laws.

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- x. The elections for the Constituent Assembly shall be held in accordance with the Political Rights Law, and in a manner that does not prejudice this proclamation. This election shall be overseen by an electoral commission that includes judges and three public figures who have no political affiliation. Local and international monitoring of these elections shall be allowed.
- xi. The principles of public rights and freedoms enshrined in international agreements to which Bahrain is party shall be applied, and shall have value equivalent to that of the new constitution.
- xii. The dialogue shall be through the Constituent Assembly, under the sponsorship of a neutral international party that guarantees its genuineness and will ensure the implementation of its results.

358. Opposition sources also indicated that it was proposed that the new constitution would be put to a popular referendum, and that it would require a 60% majority to be adopted.

359. Starting on this day, HRH the Crown Prince commenced a two-day visit to a number of neighbouring GCC countries (Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) to consult with their leaders on the ongoing situation in Bahrain.

Wednesday, 2 March 2011

360. Larger student protests were recorded in many parts of Bahrain during this day. Thousands of students left their schools and organised marches and demonstrations, many of which headed towards the major access roads in their neighbourhoods, while others proceeded either to the GCC Roundabout or the Ministry of Education.

361. Starting in the early hours of the morning, hundreds of students across Bahrain began protesting near their schools. Students of both genders who were enrolled in high schools, middle schools and technical institutions participated in large numbers. Most of these protests were limited to marching in the areas adjacent to their schools and gathering at the major roads and roundabouts in those neighbourhoods. Some of the demonstrations headed towards the GCC Roundabout by going through major roads of Manama.

362. Limited incidents of violence were reported during these student protests. One such incident occurred at 08:15 when students attempted to enter the Madinet Hamad Middle School for Girls with the purpose of assaulting the Headmistress. Some eyewitness accounts also reported that a number of students enrolled in the Madinet Hamad School for Boys were carrying knives during the protests. At 11:30, a report was filed by a group of

female students who claimed to have been assaulted by a group of female students in Madinet Hamad.

363. Some of these demonstrators proceeded towards the Ministry of Education, where they repeated slogans and expressed demands similar to those of the previous days, including the removal of the Minister of Education and the termination of contracts with temporary teachers. In addition, as in other demonstrations, banners called for the removal of the regime and denounced the use of force against peaceful protesters. At 10:00, there was a small protest outside the premises of the Ministry of Information by students criticising the biased coverage by Bahrain Television of the unfolding situation in the country.

364. Later that afternoon, a joint statement was issued by seven political societies (Al Wefaq, Wa'ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assembly, the Nationalist Democratic Society, Al-Ikha' National Society and the Al-Menbar Progressive Democratic Society) to address the participation of students in mass protests. The statement called on teachers and students to ensure the continued functioning of the education system and to avoid disruptions to school schedules. The statement also encouraged teachers and parents to avoid the politicisation of schools, which should remain academic and should focus exclusively on providing the highest quality education. The political societies issuing this statement also called on the Ministry of Education to reverse the measures that it had taken against students and teachers who participated in protests in support of the legitimate demands of the people, as well as the hiring of temporary teachers, as these measures had heightened tension and apprehension among school staff. The statement also reaffirmed the right of students to express their opinions and join demonstrations after school hours.

365. Meanwhile, at 13:00 a march proceeded from the GCC Roundabout towards the MoI Headquarters (known as "The Citadel"). The demonstration continued to increase in size until the number of participants exceeded 12,000. Again the demonstrators called for the removal of the regime, chanting, "*Erhalo...erhalo Al Khalifa*", to demand the departure of the royal family, and carried signs reading, "Down...down with the Crown". In addition, the protesters rejected calls for political dialogue before the removal of the regime, and demanded the release of all remaining political detainees. Demonstrators also expressed their discontent with the limited cabinet reshuffle of the previous Friday, which they considered insufficient, and demanded the resignation of the Prime Minister and the entire cabinet. Some participants in the march also denounced the policy of hiring foreign citizens to serve in the BDF and the local security services. During the demonstration, one protester attempted to climb the walls of "The Citadel" while another tried to remove the MoI Coat of Arms at the entrance to the compound, both of whom were prevented by the other protesters.

366. Meanwhile, the second demonstration organised by "The Gathering of National Unity" was held at the Al-Fateh Mosque in al-Juffair, starting at

16:20. Among those addressing the crowds was Sheikh Abdullatif Al-Mahmoud, who stated the following:

- a. The importance of dialogue with the GoB, which should commence without any preconditions.
- b. Bahrain's safety and security are of paramount concern.
- c. The Gathering of National Unity affirms the continued legitimacy of both the existing political regime and the ruling Al Khalifa family under the leadership of HM King Hamad.
- d. The Gathering rejects calls for the resignation of the cabinet, which would bring destruction to Bahrain.
- e. The Gathering calls for those who have disrupted public services, particularly teachers who have interfered with work at schools and prevented temporary teachers from performing their duties, to be held accountable.
- f. HM King Hamad should take the necessary measures to enforce the laws governing public demonstrations because the ongoing protests are disrupting the lives of people in Bahrain.

367. The mood at the gathering was festive, with most people carrying flags of Bahrain and reaffirming their allegiance to the Kingdom. Participants also expressed their discontent with the coverage by foreign news channels of the events in the country, which they considered incomplete, biased and overly focused on protests at the GCC Roundabout. According to MoI and some media around 450,000 people attended this rally. Other reports, however, indicated that the number of demonstrators did not exceed 100,000, some of whom were non-residents of Bahrain and citizens of other GCC States.

Thursday, 3 March 2011

368. Large numbers of students from schools across the country organised marches and demonstrations in many neighbourhoods. These protests began early in the morning when the first classes of the day were scheduled to begin. The exact number of students participating in these demonstrations is difficult to determine, but it was certainly in the thousands. Among the districts that witnessed student demonstrations were Al-Jabreyya, Khola, Sitra, Sanabis, Madinet Issa, Madinet Hamad, Jad Hafs and Muharraq.

369. Some of the student demonstrations took the form of marches on the main roads and roundabouts of the neighbourhoods in which the demonstrators' schools were situated. Others others marched towards the Ministry of Education (MoE), while yet others proceeded to the GCC Roundabout. In many cases, these demonstrations passed important government buildings, such as the premises of the Council of Ministers.

370. At the Ministry of Education, the demonstrating students were joined by teachers and representatives of the Teachers' Society who were protesting what they considered to be the deteriorating standards of education in Bahrain.

Many of those participating in the protest, the size of which exceeded 2000 individuals, called for the resignation of the Minister of Education and denounced the policy of hiring temporary teachers to replace those who were participating in the protests. According to some reports, buses were used to transport students to the various locations of the demonstrations.

371. At around 11:30, groups of students accompanied by some teachers gathered at the gates of the University of Bahrain. They reiterated some of the demands that had been expressed in other demonstrations throughout the country, including the call for the removal of the regime. The number of participants in this demonstration was around 200 individuals, most of who came from the nearby Hamad Town.

372. Demonstrations were also reported in the vicinity of some diplomatic missions in Bahrain, including the offices of the local UN Mission and the embassies of the Republic of Yemen and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

373. Continuing the practice of using convoys of vehicles as a protest tool, around 90 private cars gathered at the roundabout on the King Faisal Highway at around 15:30 and proceeded in a convoy towards the diplomatic area. As the convoy proceeded, more cars joined the protest until the number of participating vehicles exceeded 200. Meanwhile, another gathering of cars, estimated to be 70 vehicles, was reported in the Sheikh Issa bin Salman Road and then drove towards the GCC Roundabout. At 16:00, a smaller convoy of 60 cars was reported in the Jiyān district. At 17:10, the convoy that had started earlier that afternoon at the Sheikh Issa bin Salman Road was reported to have driven towards the US Embassy in Manama. Later that evening, another convoy, this time of around 200 buses, was reported to have departed from the Al-Janbeyya Road to the Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Road.

374. In the early hours of the evening, a number of gatherings were reported in the vicinity of large shopping malls including City Centre, which was close to the GCC Roundabout, and the Hawaj Stores in the Al Gufool area.

375. At 20:00, a march of over 100 people was organised by students from the University of Bahrain. The protest departed from the King Faisal Highway and walked to the GCC Roundabout. The participating students expressed numerous demands relating to the unfolding political situation and criticised the administration of the education system in Bahrain. Specifically, the students announced their support for the demonstrators at the GCC Roundabout and agreed with their call to remove the regime. Many of them also denounced the ruling Al Khalifa family and alleged that it was the reason for the grievances that Bahrainis were voicing. The protesting students raised signs stating that they were rejecting the calls of HRH the Crown Prince for calm because government forces had killed peaceful protesters. The students denounced sectarianism, affirmed national unity and demanded the release of all remaining political prisoners, including Mr Mohamed Al-Bouflasa.

376. Meanwhile, a large number of people began gathering in the parking area at SMC adjacent to the emergency department. At around 20:45, these

people marched from SMC towards the GCC Roundabout in a candlelight vigil to commemorate those who had lost their lives in confrontations with government security forces. By 21:00, when the march reached the roundabout, the number of people participating had grown to around 8000, including a large number of SMC medical staff.

377. During a press conference held by the main political opposition groups, the Secretary General of Al Wefaq, Sheikh Ali Salman, revealed documents that, according to him, proved that the land on which the Bahrain Financial Harbour was built had been sold to the Prime Minister for one Bahraini Dinar, which he considered a blatant example of government corruption and nepotism. This claim later became one of the reasons that led to a large demonstration at the Financial Harbour.

378. Six opposition political societies submitted their response to HRH the Crown Prince regarding their participation in the national dialogue. Those societies were Al Wefaq, Wa'ad, the National Democratic Assemblage, the Nationalist Democratic Society, Al Ikha' National Society and the Al Menbar Progressive Democratic Society. Their response included the following statements:

- a. As a condition for a successful dialogue, the GoB must take the following positive measures:
 - i. Allow protesters to remain at the GCC Roundabout and ensure their safety and security throughout the duration of the national dialogue and the negotiations;
 - ii. Immediately release all political detainees and drop any charges made against them;
 - iii. Ensure that State television and radio become neutral, and ensure that they become forums for the professional and unbiased expression of opinion by all citizens of all backgrounds, which will ease the sectarian tension;
 - iv. Immediately investigate all deaths that occurred since 14 February 2011 and hold all those responsible accountable; and
 - v. Dismiss the GoB.
- b. The State needs to accept the following principles at the beginning of the dialogue, and before delving into the details:
 - i. The abrogation of the 2002 Constitution and the election of a Constituent Assembly on a one-person-one-vote basis to draft the new constitution;
 - ii. The right of the people to elect, on a one-person-one-vote basis, a Council of Representatives that exclusively enjoys full legislative authority;

- iii. The right of the people to elect the government; and
 - iv. The provision of guarantees that the results of the dialogue will be implemented.
- c. There must be agreement on a relatively short timeframe for negotiations to find solutions to the political and constitutional problems facing Bahrain. This will contribute to achieving stability and allow for the beginning of a true process of development and democracy.

379. The opposition parties also prepared a document that was relayed to HRH the Crown Prince in which it identified a series of questions about the scope, content and modalities of the proposed dialogue. This document began by noting that the GoB proposed to enter into a dialogue, but that it had not clarified many central questions about this process. This was a cause for concern and raised questions about the seriousness of the GoB in finding a genuine political solution that satisfied the demands for political reform and accorded with internationally agreed human rights. The document included the following points and questions:

- a. Who are the parties to the dialogue? What was the basis for choosing those parties? Who has the right to issue invitations?
- b. Will all parties be invited? Why would some societies, figures and civil society institutions be invited and others not invited?
- c. What percentage of the Bahraini people do these parties represent? And on what basis was that percentage decided?
- d. What is the agenda of the dialogue? Who decides the agenda? To whom do the participants in the dialogue turn in case of a dispute about the agenda and the priorities?
- e. What are the terms of reference of the dialogue?
- f. What is the timeline of the dialogue?
- g. What will be done with the results of the dialogue? And what are the guarantees that those results will be implemented?
- h. More importantly, how are the disputes that will inevitably emerge during the dialogue to be resolved?
- i. These questions arise because the dialogue is like a maze from which an exit is not known. So is this maze deliberately built by the regime to dilute the popular demands or lower the ceiling of these demands?
- j. The opposition and the people have lost faith in the regime because over many decades it made promises and then circumvented them. It is therefore necessary for an international party to be present to oversee the process and

guarantee the implementation of the results of the dialogue. The United Nations or the European Union could be suitable parties to undertake this task.

- k. There is no logical reason for the regime's rejection of the opposition's proposal to elect a Constituent Assembly in which the national dialogue could be held. This proposal would eliminate all the negative aspects of other proposals and would provide the following positive features:
 - i. A dialogue on political reform should be undertaken in a constitutional institution that is governed by rules of procedure, mechanisms and specific deadlines and timelines, and not in the form of a workshop, which is not a legal structure and which is incapable of producing a result of a legal nature that achieves the desired constitutional reform.
 - ii. An elected Constituent Assembly would reflect the true weight of each party in society.
 - iii. A Constituent Assembly would be a forum for national dialogue that would not be based on sectarianism.
 - iv. Differences in opinion are normal, but there would be a way to find common ground through a Constituent Assembly, especially since the election campaigns held before the elections would give the parties an opportunity to outline their views on the political system of the country.
 - v. The Constituent Assembly would protect the dialogue from developments that could lead to its failure, such as foreign intervention or the withdrawal of any parties.
 - vi. HRH the Crown Prince, within the current constitutional structure, does not have a mandate to conduct this dialogue. Even the mandate issued for him to conduct the dialogue did not come in a form stipulated in the constitution. Therefore, there is no constitutional basis for HRH the Crown Prince to conduct this dialogue or to implement its results.
 - vii. This proposal would deflate public anger and direct attention towards the Constituent Assembly.
 - viii. Electing a Constituent Assembly has been the preferred option of many other countries that experienced similar events.
 - ix. If this proposal is not adopted, there is nothing that can guarantee that the ceiling of demands will not rise

further. At that point, the Constituent Assembly may no longer be an acceptable solution.

- x. The result of the dialogue must be the adoption of a new constitution that comes into force upon adoption. The dialogue must not reach general recommendations that would then need an implementing mechanism.
- xi. By having a Constituent Assembly, the GoB would not be able to renege on the commitments that it makes during the dialogue.

380. Later that evening, Bahrain witnessed the first major sectarian clashes between Shia and Sunnis in Hamad Town, which has a mixed population of both sects. The exact sequence of events and the circumstances that led to that outbreak of sectarian violence remain unclear. The available information indicates that the spark for the confrontation was a fight that broke out between Shia students who had been participating in demonstrations during the day and teenagers from naturalised Sunni families residing in Madinet Hamad. The situation quickly escalated, and by 21:30 a street battle broke out between Shia and Sunnis wielding sticks, knives, swords and metal rods. Most of the confrontations occurred in the vicinity of Roundabout 7 in Hamad Town, although reports indicated that clashes also spilled over into neighbouring streets and alleys. At this point, the MoI dispatched riot police who intervened to stop the clashes and dispersed the crowds. Eleven people, including three police, were injured during these clashes.²⁴⁶

381. At 22:15, violence erupted again in Hamad Town, during which around 100 individuals were reported to have clashed with police deployed in the area. Reports indicated that vehicles, buses and pickup trucks from other areas of Bahrain, including Zalaq, Al-Riffa and the GCC Roundabout, began transporting hundreds of people to Madinet Hamad in an attempt to provide reinforcements to those involved in the confrontations. Many were armed with knives and other similar objects. As the night proceeded, more cars and individuals headed towards Roundabout 7 from the surrounding areas and roundabouts. For example, at 23:30 groups of individuals carrying knives, swords and other similar weapons marched from Block 1208 in Hamad Town towards Roundabout 7. Isolated incidents, involving the harassment of people in their residences, were also recorded in the vicinity of Roundabout 7.

382. Later that night, Al Wefaq issued a statement calling for restraint and encouraging residents of Madinet Hamad to reject any attempts to provoke sectarian discord in Bahrain.

383. In light of the deteriorating situation in Bahrain, the Fitch Ratings Agency announced that it was downgrading Bahrain's investment-grade credit rating, and said that the outlook was negative due to recent economic and political uncertainty.

²⁴⁶ See Chapter VIII, Section B.

Friday, 4 March 2011

384. Throughout the early hours of the day, more confrontations occurred in areas surrounding Roundabout 7 in Hamad Town. Reports indicated that unidentified individuals had damaged private vehicles parked in the area, especially targeting vehicles that had pictures of the political leadership of Bahrain or posters supporting the GoB. Later that morning, individuals bearing knives and wooden planks were seen attempting to reach roundabout 7, but police prevented them from accessing the area.

385. Several incidents of assault on persons and destruction of private and public property were reported. For example, at 04:30 a complaint was filed alleging that four armed individuals had assaulted a person in the Al-Takheem area of the Al-Sokheir district. Later, at 06:30, a car parked at the Oma Khayam Hotel in the Al-Qodaybeyya district was attacked. Then at 07:30, unidentified individuals damaged a traffic surveillance camera in the Shiekh Khalifa bin Salman Road in the Buri area. The situation in Hamad Town remained tense throughout the day, especially in the vicinity of Roundabout 7. At 15:30, a group of almost 200 individuals was reportedly roaming the area and damaging private property. This deterioration in the security situation led residents in the area to begin bearing arms to defend themselves. Later that night, reports indicated that four individuals had been severely wounded and hospitalised after being assaulted by groups of unidentified individuals in the area.

386. After Friday prayers, a number of demonstrations were organised to protest against the coverage by Bahrain Television of the unfolding events in the country. The first demonstration began at 14:30 at the Ministry of Labour and marched towards the Information Affairs Authority, which administers Bahrain State Television. The second began at the Central Informatics Organisation and then joined the first demonstration at the Information Affairs Authority. By 16:00, the total number of demonstrators exceeded 10,000. They were led by political and religious figures, including Sheikh Mohamed Habib Alsafaf and Mr Hassan Almeshaima. The latter made a brief speech in which he highlighted that the opposition political forces had been calling for a dialogue with the GoB before “the situation gets complicated and explodes”. The GoB, he claimed, had not reacted positively, and this had led to the current situation.

387. Most of those participating in the demonstrations denounced Bahrain Television for what they considered to be its biased coverage of developments in the country. Many also claimed that programming on national television was inciting sectarianism and contributing to civil discord. In addition, many protesters raised political slogans similar to those in previous demonstrations, including calls to remove the regime, reject sectarianism and affirm commitment to national unity.

388. The other major demonstration of the day, which was dubbed “Down with the GoB”, was organised by the seven opposition political societies (Al Wefaq, Wa’ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assemblage, the Nationalist Democratic Society, Al-Ikha’ National Society

and the Al-Menbar Progressive Democratic Society). The Haq and Wafa'a opposition movements joined in organising the protest, and representatives of the GFBTU also participated. The organisers issued a press release before the protest stating that they were demanding the appointment of a transitional government of people who were known not to be corrupt and who were uninvolved in the killing of protesters, and that this new government should pave the way for a new era of true reform. The press release then outlined the following reasons for the organisers' call to remove the GoB:

- a. Prime Minister HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa bears the political responsibility for the faults of the GoB – its excesses, its failures and the violations of human rights it has committed throughout the past 40 years.
- b. The Minister of Defence and the Minister of Interior are responsible for the deaths that have occurred since 14 February 2011, and the Director of the NSA is responsible for the torture of detainees throughout the past years.
- c. The GoB has failed to provide an adequate standard of living despite the high price of oil in recent years, which has brought the GoB large revenues. The GoB has also failed to solve the housing problems of Bahrain, as evidenced by the growth of the waitlist of people waiting to be assigned government housing from 32,000 to 52,000 in the past decade.
- d. There have been serious cases of the unjust enrichment of senior government officials through illegal commissions and the misappropriation of public land.
- e. The Minister of Finance and the GoB at large have failed to disclose the financial affairs of the Royal Diwan and other bodies relating to the royal family.
- f. The GoB's deliberate policy of political naturalisation, which allowed almost 60,000 foreigners to be granted Bahrain citizenship between 2001 and 2007, has had a "disastrous social and economic effect".
- g. The ruling family monopolises half of the cabinet positions, including the Premiership, two of his deputies and the Ministers of Defence, Interior and Foreign Affairs.
- h. The GoB deliberately promotes sectarianism, tribalism and nepotism.

389. The protest, which was held at the premises of the Council of Ministers, began at around 15:00 with approximately 5000 participants, and continued to grow until according to government reports the number of demonstrators exceeded 10,000. Other accounts, however, claimed that around 100,000 people joined the demonstration. Most of the demands expressed during the protests centred on the resignation of HRH the Prime Minister and the entire cabinet. Some protesters also raised one Bahraini

Dinar notes as a symbol of the allegations previously made by Sheikh Ali Salman that HRH the Prime Minister had acquired the land on which the Financial Harbour was based for one dinar. Demonstrators repeated many of the chants that had been heard in other demonstrations, including the call for removing the regime, the rejection of sectarianism, the affirmation of national unity and denouncing the death of peaceful protesters.

390. Sheikh Ali Salman gave a short statement at the event. His speech was not scheduled to be given at the demonstration, but seemed to have been prepared to address the sectarian clashes of the previous night in Hamad Town. He lauded the peacefulness of the demonstrators, denounced attempts to cause a sectarian rift between Bahrainis, affirmed that the safety of every Sunni household was the responsibility of the Shia, and vice-versa, and condemned any assaults on Bahrain citizens or foreign residents.

391. Similar to earlier demonstrations, the protest at the Council of Ministers seemed to have been well organised. The chants heard during the protest were read out by one person and were aired on a mobile speaker system that had loud speakers placed on poles carried by the demonstrators. Many of the participants carried Bahraini flags and walked in a relatively orderly procession to the Council of Ministers and back to the GCC Roundabout.

392. As part of his ongoing preparatory consultations for the national dialogue, HRH the Crown Prince held two important meetings during the day. The first was with Sheikh Abdullatif Al-Mahmoud and other members of the Gathering of National Unity. The second meeting was with Sheikh Ali Salman, during which the Crown Prince urged Al Wefaq to reconsider the preconditions it had placed on its participation in the national dialogue, as such preconditions could undermine the entire reform process. Sheikh Ali Salman suggested that Al Wefaq could abandon the demand for the resignation of the GoB, but that it could not present any further concessions on the remainder of the demands presented in the 3 March document.

Saturday, 5 March 2011

393. The most significant event of the day was the organisation of a human chain between the Al-Fateh Mosque in Al-Juffair and the GCC Roundabout as a display of national unity. The former had been the site of relatively pro-government demonstrations, while the latter was the centre of opposition activity and protests.

394. People first started to gather at the Al-Fateh mosque in the early afternoon. By 15:15, buses were reported to be transporting individuals to the area to begin forming a human chain that would extend to the GCC Roundabout. As the number of people participating increased, the human chain began to grow into neighbouring areas. By 16:00, it had reached the vicinity of the Bahrain National Museum, and from there it arrived at the Sheikh Issa bin Salman Bridge and then proceeded to the King Faisal Highway. By 17:00, participants in the human chain reached the GCC Roundabout.

395. As noted above, the purpose of the demonstration was to display the unity of the Bahraini people. Participants, who included both women and men, lined up along the street carrying signs denouncing sectarianism and reaffirming their commitment to coexistence and harmony between Shia and Sunnis. Many of the protesters carried Bahraini flags and posters avowing their loyalty to Bahrain. A few of the protesters waved one dinar notes as a reference to the allegations that the Financial Harbour land was acquired by the Prime Minister for one dinar.

396. The other notable events of the day were isolated incidents of violence and disruption of the daily lives of some individuals. For example, at 11:30 a report was filed of an assault on a female owner of a store in the Al-Naeem shopping centre. Later that evening, seven unidentified individuals assaulted and robbed an Arab expatriate resident of Bahrain in the Al-borhama district of Manama. Meanwhile, the ongoing demonstrations and the human chain caused traffic disruptions in various parts of the capital.

397. At the political level, a meeting was held between representatives of HRH the Crown Prince and the Secretary General of Al Wefaq, Sheikh Ali Salaman. According to representatives of HRH the Crown Prince, Sheikh Salaman stated that the only possible solution at that stage was to accept the demands of the opposition. In particular, he put forward the following demands: the abrogation of the current Constitution; the drafting of a new constitution by an elected Constituent Assembly; that the new government be entirely elected; that the entire prerogatives of parliament be vested in the elected chamber; and that all government officials be held accountable.

Sunday, 6 March 2011

398. School students again participated in demonstrations that took place during the day, albeit in lower numbers than the previous week. Starting in the early morning hours, groups of students left their schools and marched either in their neighbourhoods or at the GCC Roundabout.

399. The most significant protest of the day was organised at the Gudaibiya Palace, where the weekly cabinet meeting was due to be held. Demonstrators started gathering at 08:30 and continued to increase until, by 11:30, the number of participants exceeded 10,000. The focus of the demonstration, like the protest of Friday 4 March, was the demand that the Prime Minister and entire cabinet should resign. Protesters also rejected offers to undertake a political dialogue with the GoB before the resignation of the cabinet. Some participants expressed discontent with the fact that the Prime Minister had held that office for over 40 years, and demanded that the GoB be democratically elected by the people.

400. During the demonstration, the Al Wefaq Secretary General, Sheikh Ali Salman, gave a short address in which he read *Surat Alfateha* (a Sura from the Holy Quran) for all those martyrs who had lost their lives for the cause of liberty in the Arab world, including in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Bahrain. Sheikh Ali Salman then stated the following:

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- a. The problem in Bahrain is of a political nature, and the purpose of today's demonstration is to express the desire that the government be freely elected by the people, and that no government should remain in power for 40 years.
- b. The peacefulness of the protests is laudable and has garnered the respect of the international community. He urges the demonstrators to remain peaceful and not to allow themselves to be provoked into resorting to violence.
- c. He denounces attempts to incite sectarianism and undermine national unity, and encourages every Shia to go to their Sunni neighbour and reassure them that their safety and security is of paramount importance.
- d. The purpose of the demonstrations is not "to end the dictatorship of the Al Khalifa family to establish a Shia dictatorship" in its place. Rather, the objective is to establish a polity that will respect the rights of all citizens on the basis of equality.

401. Among the other political leaders participating in the demonstration were Mr Hassam Almeshaima, former Member of the Council of Representatives Mr Jawad Fayrouz, Mr Ibrahim Sharif from the Wa'ad movement, and Abdulla Saleh from the Amal political society.

402. Later that afternoon, demonstrations in various neighbourhoods proceeded towards the GCC Roundabout. One of these protests started at SMC at 17:15 and involved around 100 demonstrators, including a number of medical personnel. Another demonstration took the form of a convoy of 50 vehicles that departed from the A'Ali district and headed towards the GCC Roundabout. At 16:00, a procession of horses went from the Seef district to the GCC Roundabout. Another demonstration, reported to have included 200 students and unemployed individuals, began at the Dana Roundabout and then proceeded to the GCC Roundabout.

403. At the GCC Roundabout, political figures, community leaders, human rights activists and representatives of professional syndicates and trade unions addressed the demonstrators and shared their views about the situation in Bahrain. Some of the speeches were delivered from the stage set up at the roundabout. The range of views expressed reflected the diversity of positions among the various opposition forces and civil society organisations. Some speakers reiterated the call to remove the regime, some focused on the need for the Prime Minister and the cabinet to resign, while others discussed the developments relating to the ongoing dialogue between opposition parties and HRH the Crown Prince and whether this dialogue should proceed without conditions. Many speakers also underlined the necessity of rewriting the Constitution to limit the powers of the King and increase legislative oversight of the executive. Meanwhile, some activists demanded accountability for those implicated in the killings of peaceful protests and those responsible for the mistreatment of detainees, both during the ongoing crisis and in previous

years. Many protesters also voiced allegations of corrupt practices by senior government officials, including the Prime Minister. People would gather around the tents of the various political and civil society groups to participate in discussions about the unfolding situation.

404. In the early evening, protesters at the GCC Roundabout began moving towards the Bahrain Financial Harbour. At first, a small number of people took blankets and sat at the entrance to the harbour. They were later joined by more protesters from the roundabout who carried Bahraini flags, political posters, blankets and a few tents which were subsequently set up. By 23:30, the number of demonstrators gathered at the harbour exceeded 100. Dr Abduljalil Alsankis was among the political figures participating in this protest.

405. That evening, HRH the Crown Prince gave an interview on Bahrain Television in which he reiterated his call to all political societies to engage in a dialogue, which he said was better than conflict and stubbornness. HRH the Crown Prince affirmed his belief that the will of the people should be the basis for future reform, that the only way forward for Bahrain was a national dialogue, and that the entire country agreed on 70-80% of the demands presented by the parties. He also warned against escalating tensions in the country.

Monday, 7 March 2011

406. A number of important developments occurred during the day, the most significant of which was the establishment of a coalition to create a republic in Bahrain by a group of opposition factions. The other notable event was a significant increase in the presence of protesters in the Bahrain Financial Harbour and surrounding streets; this was considered an important escalation in the pressure on the GoB by disrupting work in an important economic district.

407. The movement of protesters from the GCC Roundabout to the Financial Harbour began in the early hours of the day. At 01:30, individuals were seen transporting blankets, posters, signs and small tents from the roundabout to the area surrounding the harbour. By midday, at least four tents had been set up at the location. As the day proceeded, the number of people gathered at the site increased until it reached around 200. Many of the protesters held up one dinar notes in reference to accusations that the land of the harbour had been sold to the Prime Minister for one dinar.

408. Reports indicated that individuals gathered at the harbour began to interfere with traffic on the King Faisal Highway. At around 17:00, a car driven by a Sunni woman was blocked by what appeared to be a checkpoint that was stopping vehicles on which there were signs or posters expressing support for the political leadership of Bahrain and the ruling Al Khalifa family. Gradually the car was surrounded by large numbers of demonstrators, who began pounding on the vehicle and chanting anti-government slogans. Fearing for the safety of the woman, other demonstrators and some police officers intervened to push back the crowd and allow the car to pass. As some

space was cleared, the car began to drive away. As it gained speed, however, it struck and injured one of the protesters, who was subsequently hospitalised.

409. This incident caused mass anger among the demonstrators who vowed to retaliate against the woman and her family. Later that evening, the woman's address was circulated via SMS messages and on internet social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, and there were calls for people to attack her residence. In response, hundreds of Sunni men wielding swords, knives, sticks and other weapons assembled at the woman's house to protect her from any possible assault by Shia groups. This incident intensified sectarian tensions and contributed to a heightened sense of a deterioration of security in Bahrain. The residents of some neighbourhoods also began to consider the formation of "popular committees" to defend their homes against attacks by armed groups that were reported to be assaulting private residences.

410. During the day, HRH the Crown Prince dispatched Mr Zayed Al-Zayani to the GCC Roundabout to discuss ongoing developments with those leading the demonstrations and overseeing the activities taking place in the tents that had been set up at the roundabout. The purpose of this visit was, *inter alia*, to reach out directly to protesters and to bypass Al Wefaq, which HRH the Crown Prince now suspected was being intransigent and unwilling to compromise.

411. Other demonstrations were recorded throughout the day, including at the Ministry of Health in Al-Juffair and at the Ministry of Industry and Trade in the Al-Seef district. Later, a group of demonstrators headed to the US Embassy in Manama. By 10:30, the size of that demonstration reached almost 100 individuals.

412. Meanwhile starting at 15:00, large groups of people began to march towards the headquarters of the CID. The number of people participating in this protest reached around 3000 by 16:30. The demands expressed were similar to those at previous demonstrations throughout the country. They included the rejection of political dialogue with the GoB before the regime was removed, the call for the Prime Minister to resign and the demand to release all political prisoners. Many people also called for prosecuting those responsible for the death of peaceful protesters and for holding accountable government officials and security personnel against whom there were allegations of torture from the mid-1990s. Among the political figures present at this demonstration was Sheikh Mohamed Habib Alsafaf.

413. The most important development of the day, however, was the announcement by a group of opposition political groups of the establishment of a coalition for the founding of a republic in Bahrain. The leader of the Haq movement, Mr Hassan Almeshaima, announced the establishment of this coalition in a speech at the GCC Roundabout, during which he highlighted the following points:

- a. The Haq, Wafa'a and Free Bahraini Movements have established "The Coalition for the Republic", which endeavours to topple the monarchy in Bahrain and establish a

republic. This has become necessary in light of the “oppressive and corrupt” rule of the Al Khalifa family.

- b. The Coalition will strive to establish the republic using peaceful means, including civil disobedience and peaceful resistance.
- c. The Coalition will gradually escalate its pressure on the GoB using peaceful means. The measures undertaken will be decided and executed in a decentralised manner, which has proven to be more successful than the centralised control of the protests.
- d. The royal regime has failed to quell the revolution forcefully, and is now trying to undermine it by political manoeuvres and incitement to sectarianism.
- e. The final decision on whether to establish the republic is up to the people of Bahrain, and the Coalition is willing to relinquish this demand if the people so prefer. The Coalition warns, however, that another opportunity to establish a democratic republic in Bahrain might not arise, and a failure to remove the monarchy might lead to very negative consequences. The Coalition also calls for continued coordination among the opposition parties and forces.

414. In a subsequent press interview, Mr Almeshaima clarified that one of the reasons that had compelled the coalition to issue this statement and to openly call for the establishment of a republic was that the popular demand to remove the regime had given rise to different interpretations. Some, he said, understood this as meaning the removal of the cabinet, while others interpreted it as meaning the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. For the coalition, however, the removal of the regime meant establishing a republic. He also noted that the call to establish a republic did not necessarily contradict the more moderate demands advanced by other opposition parties, like Al Wefaq. Mr Almeshaima emphasised that he had no faith in the possibility of dialogue with a regime that, in his view, was inciting sectarianism and detaining individuals. Mr Almeshaima also denied any relations between the coalition and Iran, and affirmed that the coalition’s purpose was to establish a democratic republic not a theocracy.

415. That day, the GCC Council of Foreign Ministers convened in the United Arab Emirates to discuss the unfolding situation in Bahrain. The GCC member States praised HM King Hamad for authorising HRH the Crown Prince to initiate a dialogue with the opposition, which represented an opportunity to undertake reforms that would satisfy the needs of the Bahraini people in accordance with the National Action Charter of 2001. The Foreign Ministers also reaffirmed that they would support Bahrain politically and economically, and pledged to defend it, as the security of the GCC member States was indivisible.

Tuesday, 8 March 2011

416. Demonstrations continued throughout the day at both the GCC Roundabout and the Bahrain Financial Harbour. Other smaller demonstrations were also recorded in various neighbourhoods in Manama and nearby villages. In addition, incidents of assault against citizens and resident expatriate workers were reported.

417. The number of demonstrators at the Financial Harbour continued to grow. The demands expressed during these protests mirrored those in other locations. Most of those present called for the removal of the regime and the resignation of the cabinet. They criticised what they described as government corruption, and raised one Bahraini dinar notes as a symbol of the allegation that the land on which the harbour was built was sold to HRH the Prime Minister for one dinar. Intermittently during the day, demonstrators were reported to have disrupted traffic on the King Faisal Highway adjacent to the harbour.

418. At 15:00, a group of around 150 women marched from the Bahrain Financial Harbour down the King Faisal Highway towards the GCC Roundabout. The women raised slogans similar to those heard in other demonstrations, including the demand to remove the regime, the call for HRH the Prime Minister and the Cabinet to resign, and the chants, “*Erhal...erhal Al Khalifa*” (a call to the ruling family to leave), and, “Down with Hamad” (in reference to the King). The demonstrators also reaffirmed their rejection of attempts to drive a wedge between Shia and Sunnis, and expressed their commitment to national unity. Some protesters criticised the government policy of political naturalisation, which aimed to affect the demographic balance in Bahrain. Later that night, at approximately 20:20, another march of around 500 women was reported to have proceeded from the GCC Roundabout and walked down the King Faisal Highway, causing some disruption of traffic in the area.

419. Meanwhile, a number of prominent individuals gave speeches at the GCC Roundabout. Some of the speakers were political figures, religious clerics, journalists, civil society leaders, human rights activists and lawyers. Among those who spoke was Ms Ayat Al-Qurmezi, a 20-year-old University of Bahrain student and poet, who delivered a number of poems during the protests at the GCC Roundabout. Some of these poems were deeply critical of HM King Hamad, the Prime Minister and the ruling family. In her poems, Ms Al-Qurmezi expressed her views relating to the political situation in Bahrain, including what she considered to be the undemocratic policies of the regime and the corrupt practices of senior government officials.

420. Other speakers at the roundabout, including prominent journalists, addressed what they perceived to be a deliberate policy of the GoB to incite sectarianism and undermine social harmony. Speakers urged the demonstrators to remain peaceful and not to respond to provocations, especially those from pro-government media outlets, and to reach out to the Sunni community to reassure them that the purpose of the ongoing demonstrations was not to create a regime that would oppress them.

421. On the political front, some political societies demanded guarantees that the GoB would respect the measures agreed upon during the national dialogue. Representatives of HRH the Crown Prince proposed two options. The first would guarantee that HM King Hamad would not object to the measures agreed upon during the national dialogue. The second option was to submit the results of the national dialogue to a popular referendum. Eventually, the latter option was adopted by HRH the Crown Prince and his team.

Wednesday, 9 March 2011

422. Three major demonstrations took place during the day at the University of Bahrain, the Information Affairs Authority and the General Directorate of Nationality, Passports and Residency. Demonstrations also continued at the GCC Roundabout and the Bahrain Financial Harbour.

423. The day began with some schools reporting cases of absenteeism among their student body. These included the Cordoba Middle School in Bilad Al-Qadeem, Ahmed Al-Omran High School in Al Hooraa and the Sheikh Abdulla bin Issa Industrial High School. Around 100 students marched from this latter school towards the University of Bahrain at 09:00, where they were joined by demonstrators from other areas. Reports indicated that at 11:00 some of these demonstrators attempted to enter the university campus but were prevented by university security.

424. Meanwhile, hundreds of people, including students majoring in media studies at the University of Bahrain, began gathering at the Information Affairs Authority to protest against the policies and programming of Bahrain Television. Many of the demonstrators demanded the resignation of the Minister of Information and denounced Bahrain Television for what they considered to be its incitement of sectarianism. Protesters also called on Bahrain Television to represent the situation in the country accurately and objectively, and to stop concealing information about violations committed by the GoB against demonstrators.

425. The third major protest, which was held at the General Directorate of Nationality, Passports and Residency, began in the early afternoon and continued until 17:00. Thousands of individuals demonstrated against the naturalisation policies of the GoB, which they claimed were designed to alter the demographic balance in favour of the Sunni population. Many protesters also denounced the policy of hiring expatriates to work in the security services and described those expatriates as “mercenaries”. In addition, the demonstrators expressed political demands similar to those heard in other protests, such as the slogan “the people demand the removal of the regime”. Among those leading the demonstration was Sheikh Mohamed Habib Alsafaf.

426. Demonstrations also continued at both the Bahrain Financial Harbour and at the GCC Roundabout. At 20:00, a march was reported to have departed from the harbour to the roundabout, where various activities were being organised in the tents. Political figures, journalists and community leaders gave speeches, and at around 20:30 a play was performed.

427. Later that evening, some political leaders sought to organise a march towards the Al-Riffa district, where the Royal Palace and the residences of the senior political leadership were located. The information was circulated among the residents of Al-Riffa who then prepared to confront the proposed march.

Thursday, 10 March 2011

428. The most significant developments on this day were the large numbers of school students who demonstrated in many neighbourhoods and villages across Bahrain and the clashes that occurred in some of those schools between supporters of the government and anti-government protesters.

429. Starting in the early hours of the morning, students began to leave their schools in numerous districts including Jad Hafs, Issa Town, A'Ali, Sanad, Adliya, Al-Deraz, Bou Ghazal, Al-Naeem and Hamad Town. Many of these demonstrations took the form of marches that remained in the school neighbourhoods, while in others the demonstrating students marched towards one of the main protest centres in the country including the GCC Roundabout, SMC and the Financial Harbour. The total number of absent students was estimated to have exceeded 3000.

430. Other groups of students proceeded to the Ministry of Education, where they were joined by representatives of the Teachers' Union. By 11:00, the number of protesters at the Ministry had exceeded 300, most of whom were demanding the resignation of the Minister of Education and criticising the policy of hiring temporary teachers to replace those who had gone on strike during the earlier days of the demonstrations. Later in the day, small groups of individuals reportedly gathered at the residence of the Minister of Education to protect it against possible attacks by demonstrators.

431. Meanwhile, one of the most notable incidents of violence in Bahraini schools was reported when clashes occurred at the Saar High School for Girls. While the exact sequence of events remains unclear, reports indicated that at 09:00 some of the students began chanting anti-government slogans and demanding to be let out of the school. Thereafter, arguments broke out between those students and pro-government students, which quickly led to clashes between both sides. By 10:00, parents and family members who had heard of these incidents, began to converge on the school. This led to confrontations among parents and between some parents and students.

432. As matters deteriorated, students and some parents began to threaten the school Headmistress and some of the staff, which compelled them to flee their offices and hide in the registration building inside the school. Later, students surrounded that building and started attacking it with stones, breaking windows and threatening those hiding inside. As the situation worsened, the MoI dispatched riot control forces to disperse the gathering crowds. The Governor of the Shamaliyah Governorate, members of Al Wefaq and other community leaders also arrived on the scene to try to contain the situation. By 15:30, most of those present at the school had vacated the area and the staff had been safely evacuated. In total, eight students were injured and received

medical care at SMC. It was decided in the aftermath of this incident to suspend classes at the school indefinitely.

433. Other schools, including the Al-‘ahd Al-Zakher High School for Girls and the Yathreb Elementary School for Girls, reported incidents of violence between students, albeit on a smaller scale than at the Saar High School. Later in the day, it was announced that in light of the deteriorating situation and the large number of absent students, all schools in Hamad Town had suspended classes until further notice.

434. The University of Bahrain also witnessed its first major demonstration. At 09:30, around 300 students and some university staff began to gather in the main yard of the Sakhir Campus in the area between the administrative buildings and the library. The demonstration took the form of a march followed by a silent sit-in. The participants declared their solidarity with the protesters at the GCC Roundabout, denounced the killing of peaceful protesters, affirmed their commitment to national unity and rejected sectarianism. The march ended at around 11:30 after senior university administrators met with the students and listened to their demands.

435. As the day proceeded, more demonstrations were reported in various parts of Bahrain. One of these was organised during the afternoon at the premises of the UN offices in Manama, in which over 3000 individuals participated. Most of the demands expressed at that protests mirrored those heard in other demonstrations, including calls for the removal of the regime and departure of the royal family (“*erhalo Al Khalifa*”), the rejection of sectarianism and the denunciation of the killing of peaceful protesters. Some of the demonstrators also accused the UN of adopting double standards by not intervening in Bahrain to halt what the protesters considered to be violations of human rights.

436. As a result of the visit of HRH the Crown Prince to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar on 1 and 2 March, it was announced that the GCC would present \$10 billion to Bahrain and Oman for developmental purposes.

437. At 16:40, the Gathering of National Unity organised an event in the Al-Haneneya district, where speeches were given about the unfolding situation. Later, a large gathering of individuals was reported at the headquarters of the Al-Asala political society in Al-Beseteen, where some speeches were made that were generally supportive of the GoB. At 22:00, the leader of the Gathering of National Unity, Sheikh Abdullatif Al-Mahmoud, joined those gathered at the premises of Al-Asala, where he gave a speech.

438. Opposition leaders congregated at the GCC Roundabout and the Bahrain Financial Harbour, where representatives of all the major opposition groups addressed the demonstrators. It was reported that some of the political figures encouraged demonstrators to join a march towards the Royal Palace in the Al-Riffa district that was planned for the next day.

439. That night, the seven main opposition political societies issued a joint communiqué about the events planned for the following day. Those societies

were Al Wefaq, Wa'ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assemblage, the Nationalist Democratic Society, Al Ikha' National Society and the Al Menbar Progressive Democratic Society. The communiqué included the following statements:

- a. The youth of the 14 February movement are invited to attend a march titled "Down with the 2002 Constitution" at 4:00 p.m. the next day, which will begin in the Seef district and proceed towards the GCC Roundabout.
- b. The youth are applauded for not consenting to the calls that were issued to organise a march on the Royal Palace in Al-Riffa the next day at the same time as the "Down with the 2002 Constitution" demonstration.
- c. The prudence of the youth is also applauded for not agreeing to march to the Al-Riffa district, because the situation would have certainly descended into sectarian clashes.
- d. Everyone in Bahrain is urged not to allow the situation to slip into a confrontation on sectarian grounds, and any attempts to provoke such clashes must be resisted.

Friday, 11 March 2011

440. Two major demonstrations were held after Friday prayers. The first began in the Seef district and proceeded towards the GCC Roundabout. This protest focused on the demand to abrogate the 2002 Constitution. The other demonstration, which was significantly smaller, attempted to enter the Al-Riffa district.

441. The early hours of the day witnessed several incidents of vandalism and assaults on individuals and private property. Some of these incidents were reported in the Al-Riffa Al-Gharby and East Riffa neighbourhoods, which are within close proximity of the Royal Palace. Other areas affected by these incidents included the Ma'ameer industrial district, the Zayed neighbourhood, A'Ali and Salamabad.

442. Despite the call by the major opposition political societies not to march toward the Royal Palace, people began to gather in the areas and neighbourhoods surrounding Al-Riffa after Friday prayers. The largest of these gatherings was at the Sheikh Issa mosque where 400 individuals began walking towards the Sa'aa Roundabout in Al-Riffa, which is in the immediate vicinity of the Royal Palace and the Diwan of HRH the Crown Prince. Gradually, more people joined the demonstration from neighbouring districts, particularly from A'Ali where by 15:20 around 2500 individuals began marching from the A'Ali driving school towards the Sa'aa Roundabout.

443. Between 15:30 and 15:40, the protesters had reached the barricades that the MoI had set up on the Sheikh Ali Salman Road to deny people access to the Sa'aa Roundabout. The number of protesters exceeded 3000, and many had begun to leave the road to bypass the MoI barricade by walking through

the areas adjacent to the road. To pre-empt this, the MoI had placed a barbed wire fence across the empty land adjacent to the road.

444. Multiple attempts to dissuade the demonstrators and convince them to turn back failed. A senior police officer warned the demonstrators to retreat, explaining that large numbers of predominantly Sunni residents of Al-Riffa had gathered behind the police barricade, and therefore allowing the protesters through would lead to violent confrontations. At 15:30, the President of the Council of Representatives arrived to attempt to convince the protesters to depart. The total number of people on both sides of the barricade was estimated to exceed 8000.

445. Most of the demonstrators chanted the slogan, “The people demand the removal of the regime”, while many others chanted, “*Yaskot ... yaskot Hamad*” (“Down ... down Hamad”). The demonstrators also criticised the Prime Minister and demanded his resignation.

446. At 17:00, when attempts to persuade the demonstrators to vacate the area had failed, and after many of them had managed to break through the barbed wire fence, police began dispersing them using tear gas. By 17:30, the area had been cleared of all demonstrators.

447. Later that evening, pro-government demonstrators gathered in the vicinity of the Prime Minister’s residence to voice their support of the GoB.

448. Meanwhile, a much larger demonstration was organised in the Seef district to call for the abrogation of the 2002 Constitution. Tens of thousands of individuals participated in this march, which was called for by Al Wefaq, Wa’ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assemblage, the Nationalist Democratic Society, Al Ikha’ National Society and the Al Menbar Progressive Democratic Society. The demonstrators demanded that the Constitution be rewritten and called on the Prime Minister to resign. Some of the participants also demanded the removal of the regime and accountability for those responsible for killing peaceful protesters.

449. Following the event, the political opposition groups leading the demonstration issued a statement in which they announced that the protest had proved that the people of Bahrain had rejected the 2002 Constitution. They also called for the election of a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution that would provide for a fully elected and empowered legislature, a government freely elected by the people, the peaceful transfer of power, equality before the law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and free and fair elections. The statement also denounced the 2002 Constitution because it was “concocted in the dark behind the backs of the people” and because it contradicted the National Action Charter, especially as related to the requirement that legislative functions be within the exclusive purview of the elected chamber of Parliament.

450. At the GCC Roundabout, protests, events and discussions continued much the same as in the previous days. Community leaders and political figures of various backgrounds gave speeches. At 19:00, a march that had

departed from SMC arrived at the roundabout, and later in the evening another candle light vigil left from the roundabout to the UN offices.

451. Political consultations continued throughout the day between the Crown Prince and opposition leaders. Among those who presented their visions on the proposed national dialogue was Sheikh Abdulla Al-Ghuraifi, who sent a document to HRH the Crown Prince which included the following demands:

- a. The establishment of a constitutional monarchy;
- b. The establishment of a fully empowered parliament;
- c. Ensuring an elected and fully representative government; and
- d. A fair electoral district system.

452. During earlier discussions between representatives of HRH the Crown Prince and members of Al Wefaq, the latter expressed unease about entering into a national dialogue in which other stakeholders would be present. Their preference was to conduct a direct one-to-one dialogue with HRH the Crown Prince. HRH the Crown Prince's negotiating team felt that this would complicate the process of launching the national dialogue because of the necessity of including the Gathering of National Unity. When the representatives of HRH the Crown Prince discussed the matter with Sheikh Abdullatif Al-Mahmoud, the latter also mentioned that he was willing to accept a dialogue that was set up in a way that did not require that they negotiate face-to-face with Al Wefaq, so as to avoid a confrontation.

Saturday, 12 March 2011

453. For the second consecutive day, protests were organised at locations directly affiliated with the Royal Palace. At around 14:30, individuals began to gather at the Malkeya District Roundabout, after which they began to march towards the Safriyya Palace. By 15:00, persons from Dar Kulaib and Sadad joined the demonstration, increasing the number of participants to almost 2000. By 16:00, the march reached the main gates of the Safriyya Palace and by that time had over 12,000 participants. Among the political figures leading the demonstration were Mr Hassan Almeshaima, Sheikh Mohamed Habib Elsafaf and Dr Abduljalil El-Sankis.

454. Similar to previous demonstrations, the protesters called for the removal of the regime, the resignation of the GoB and the abrogation of the Constitution. Many of the demonstrators also criticised the King and repeated the slogan, "Down ... Down Hamad", which by now was being frequently heard in Bahrain. Many of the protesters also criticised the Prime Minister and demanded his resignation. Among the notable features of this demonstration was that many of the protesters wore white garments as a symbol of their preparedness to die to achieve their objectives.

455. Unlike the demonstration of the previous day at the Sa'aa Roundabout at Al-Riffa, there was no police presence during this

demonstration and no confrontations between demonstrators and security personnel were reported.

456. Meanwhile, a small flotilla consisting of 30 fishing vessels sailed from the Al-Juffair harbour and arrived at 16:00 at the Bahrain Financial Harbour as a sign of support for the demonstrators camped there.

457. Throughout the day, numerous cases of vandalism were reported in various areas of Bahrain. These were generally attributable to the gradually deteriorating security situation and the breakdown of law and order in the country. For example, a checkpoint was set up in the vicinity of Roundabout 13 in Hamad Town at which numerous incidents of harassment were reported. Moreover, at 22:30 reports indicated that unidentified individuals forced shop owners in the Manama Market to close their stores and threatened to destroy them if they were not closed. Later, a police officer reported being assaulted by a group of persons carrying knives.

458. Many of the attacks reported during the day were against expatriates residing in Bahrain, especially those of Asian descent. At 21:50, for example, reports were filed by a person of Asian descent that a large group of people was assaulting foreign workers in the areas surrounding the Bahrain Hotel. Similarly, groups of unidentified individuals bearing sticks, wooden planks and metal rods set up a road block in the vicinity of the Manama Police Department and attacked a person of Asian descent.

459. In an attempt to reach a compromise, HRH the Crown Prince prepared a document outlining seven core principles on which the national dialogue should be based. These principles were partially drawn from the documents presented by the opposition political societies, including Al Wefaq, and from other documents. The seven principles were:

- a. The Council of Representatives should be fully empowered.
- b. The GoB should reflect the will of the people.
- c. Electoral districting should be just.
- d. Naturalisation policies should be discussed.
- e. GoBal and financial corruption should be combatted.
- f. National assets should be protected.
- g. Sectarian tensions should be addressed.

460. It was the view of HRH the Crown Prince and his team that these principles were a crystallisation of what had always been communicated to the opposition as being open for discussion during the national dialogue. This was best reflected, in the view of the negotiating team, in the reality that the GoB was willing to discuss making the office of the Prime Minister accountable to Parliament and reducing the powers of the *Shura* (Consultative) Council by modelling it along the lines of the British House of Lords.

461. Later that day, these principles were used to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which outlined the mechanism for dialogue and reform. HRH the Crown Prince met HM King Hamad that night and received His Majesty's approval of this document and consented to undertaking consultations with the opposition on this basis. The MoU included the following points:

- a. The dialogue should be about undertaking constitutional amendments to the political system in the Kingdom.
- b. Each side can assemble support teams composed of any persons deemed appropriate for the negotiations.
- c. A consensus during the dialogue should lead to an agreement on amending the Constitution. After this consensus is reached, the proposed constitutional amendments should be presented to the people in a popular referendum. The results of the referendum would come into force once they were announced, on the condition that at least 70% of eligible voters participated and that two-thirds of those voting approved the proposed amendments. Both sides may consult with active forces in Bahraini society to reach a national consensus on the proposed amendments.
- d. The GoB may not unilaterally present the agreements reached at the national dialogue to a referendum without first consulting with the opposition.
- e. In case any issues are not agreed upon during the national dialogue, the disputed matters shall be put to the people in a referendum, to which the provisions of article (c) above shall apply.
- f. The national dialogue should begin immediately following the agreement on these principles, and the referendum on the results shall be held within three months of the beginning of the dialogue.
- g. The referendum shall be undertaken under full judicial supervision.

462. In light of the provisions of the 2002 Constitution, the implementation of these proposals required an amendment to the Constitution to allow the results of the national dialogue to be placed before the Bahraini people in a popular referendum. Therefore, the legal advisers of the Crown Prince prepared a draft amendment to the Constitution which would allow for the implementation of the agreement.

463. The MoU was shown to the leading Shia cleric Sheikh Abdulla Al-Ghuraifi, who endorsed it. Representatives of HRH the Crown Prince also called prominent individuals in the business community to consult on the content of the MoU, especially regarding the questions of turning Bahrain into a single electoral district and the election of HRH the Prime Minister. The

position of all those contacted was that they rejected the idea of an elected Prime Minister. In addition, some recommended that a State of National Safety be declared.

464. At 01:00 the next day, HRH the Crown Prince agreed to have the MoU presented to Sheikh Issa Qassim later in the morning for approval so that Al Wefaq could begin the dialogue.

Sunday, 13 March 2011

465. This day was an important turning point in the sequence of events in Bahrain. The general level of security and law and order deteriorated significantly throughout the country as more cases of assault against individuals and against private and public property and incidents of sectarian clashes were reported. There were also confrontations between security forces and demonstrators camped at the Bahrain Financial Harbour who, early in the day, had fully obstructed traffic on the King Faisal Highway. The University of Bahrain witnessed its most violent clashes, which left many people injured and led to the suspension of classes.

466. From the early hours of the day, residents of various neighbourhoods reported that groups of unidentified individuals carrying knives, swords and wooden planks were roaming the streets and threatening passers-by, attacking vehicles and destroying public property. In A'Ali, for example, masked individuals were seen at 02:00 assaulting and verbally abusing persons in the vicinity of Roads 36 and 38. Similarly, groups of individuals were reported to have blocked Road 2 adjacent to the Dana Shopping Centre. Later that morning, individuals carrying swords and sticks were seen walking towards Roundabout 22 in Dar Kulaib where they were recorded to have damaged public property and private vehicles. In Hamad Town, large gatherings of unidentified individuals brandishing swords, knives and other sharp objects blocked the Al-Zallaq Road. At 17:30, a number of persons carrying wooden planks were seen proceeding down Kuwait Road toward Om Al-Hasm where they obstructed traffic and verbally insulted passers-by. That night, a group of individuals was attacked by an unidentified person using a Molotov cocktail in Al-Baseeten.

467. Later in the evening, unidentified persons were reported to have attacked shops in a number of areas, including Ma'atam Bin Saloum, Sa'sa'a Road and Sheikh Abdulla Street in Manama. Other stores were either vandalised or forced to close in the districts of Al-Baseeten and Jad Ali. By 17:30, most shops and commercial establishments had been closed in Hamad Town.

468. The occurrence of these and other incidents throughout the day, and the spread of information about the presence of armed gangs and groups of vandals in many areas of Bahrain, caused a wave of fear among families for their safety and security. This prompted residents of various neighbourhoods and villages to organise "popular committees" to protect their lives and property. For example, in Safara groups of individuals gathered in the vicinity of the National Guard facility in the area to deter against attacks by

individuals and vandals. Similarly, residents of Al-Muharraq set up a roadblock across the Sheikh Issa and Sheikh Hamad Bridges to stop unidentified individuals from entering the area. Starting at 14:00, residents of Al-Riffa gathered in the Al-Mo'askar Street and the Al-Sa'aa Roundabout to check the identities of people driving through the neighbourhood. Citizens from various neighbourhoods also gathered at the Bahrain International Airport to protect it against possible attacks by vandals and armed gangs.

469. Besides the palpable deterioration of security and law and order in many parts of Bahrain, one of the significant events of the day was a confrontation between protesters camped at the Bahrain Financial Harbour and security forces. Starting at 05:00, demonstrators began obstructing traffic across the King Faisal Highway, one of the main thoroughfares of Manama. Protesters used plastic traffic barriers, metal barricades, lamp posts, garbage dumpsters and other large objects to block traffic. Later, a group of protesters numbering over 100 began standing behind these barricades to prevent their removal by the police.

470. Police armed only with batons began arriving at the scene at around 07:00. A senior police officer used a megaphone to encourage protesters to vacate the area, remove the barricades and reopen the King Faisal Highway to traffic. Reports indicated that the protesters refused to leave the area, at which time more police units were dispatched to the area. As the standoff continued, some of the protesters broke through the barricades and charged at the police units. Given that they were unarmed and outnumbered, the police lines broke and the personnel retreated in a disorganised manner. Some of the protesters pursued the police units as they withdrew, attacking and injuring a number of police officers and damaging police vehicles.

471. By 08:30, the police units in the area had regrouped and reinforcements were dispatched to assist in reopening the King Faisal Highway and clearing the tents set up by demonstrators at the Financial Harbour. The MoI deployed riot police armed with tear gas, rubber bullets, sound bombs and a water cannon mounted on an armoured vehicle. In the following hours, skirmishes continued between police and protesters, whose numbers increased when they were joined by individuals from the GCC Roundabout and other areas of Manama. Some of the protesters were reported to have attacked police units with rocks, metal rods and sharp objects. The scope of these confrontations expanded from the immediate vicinity of the harbour to the overpass adjacent to the GCC Roundabout and then to the Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Road. During these clashes, which continued throughout the morning, numerous protesters were beaten, while others sustained rubber bullet wounds and some suffered from choking caused by tear gas. According to an MoI statement issued later in the day, 14 police officers were wounded during the events at the Financial Harbour, including one who was struck by a civilian car reportedly driven by one of the demonstrators.

472. Despite attempts by security forces to reopen the main thoroughfares and roads surrounding the GCC Roundabout, the King Faisal Highway and

the Sheikh Khalifa bin Salaman Road remained blocked. Throughout the day, protesters brought more plastic barricades and metal barriers to obstruct traffic. They also used heavy machinery to transport rubble, cement bars and large metal tubes from nearby construction sites, as well as rocks, mounds of sand and lamp posts, to block these roads.

473. As news of the confrontations at the Financial Harbour spread, students at the University of Bahrain organised a demonstration at the Sakhir campus to denounce the use of force against protesters. Reports also indicate that some students from Bahrain Polytechnic participated in these protests. While there are conflicting accounts of the events at the university, it is undisputed that the first gatherings of students began at 08:30. Those students first marched to the food court area and then moved on towards colleges and other facilities on the campus.

474. There are two different accounts of what then occurred. Some reports claimed that pro-government students began to physically attack and verbally harass the protesting students. Pro-opposition students alleged that unidentified individuals who were not students and who were armed with knives, swords and other sharp objects were allowed onto the campus to confront the protesting students, and that university security did nothing to stop those individuals.

475. Conversely, other reports claimed that the number of protesting students gradually increased until it reached around 500. It was claimed that those demonstrators entered a number of colleges, including the Teachers' College, the Business College and the College of Arts, where they called for the removal of the King and the regime, as well as the resignation of the Prime Minister and the cabinet, and expressed their support for protesters at the GCC Roundabout and the Financial Harbour. At this point, clashes began to occur between pro-government and pro-opposition students at a number of colleges and at the central library. Knives, swords, wooden planks, rocks and other objects were used during these confrontations, in which a number of private vehicles were destroyed. There were no reports of firearms being used by either side.

476. According to pro-government reports, unidentified individuals were transported from various parts of Bahrain, including the GCC Roundabout, to assist the pro-opposition students. It was claimed that those persons stormed the eastern entrance of the university and attacked university security personnel. As clashes continued, a number of pro-government students and staff members gathered in the English Language Centre (Building S-20) to seek refuge. It was alleged that pro-opposition demonstrators then surrounded the building and began to break its windows and doors. This compelled the students to move to the second floor of the building to avoid injury. Thereafter, reports indicated that the demonstrating students set fire to a classroom on the ground floor to compel the students on the second floor to leave the building.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ See Chapter VII, Section C.

477. As demonstrations and clashes continued at various areas of the University of Bahrain's Al-Sukheir campus, riot police and firefighters were dispatched to disperse the demonstrators and extinguish the fire in Building S-20. Police units used tear gas, rubber bullets and sound bombs to confront the demonstrators.

478. Later in the day, members of the "Students First" list announced their resignation from the University of Bahrain Student Council to protest what they claimed was the "breaking into the university campus by armed vandals (*baltageyya*) with the acquiescence of the government security forces".²⁴⁸

479. In light of the events of the day, the administration of the University of Bahrain announced the suspension of classes until further notice.

480. Meanwhile, Al Wefaq issued a statement commenting on the developments that had occurred during the day. The statement claimed that "security was no longer available in Bahrain due to the presence of armed groups and militias throughout the country who were attacking people, their neighbourhoods and educational institutions using sharp objects and similar weapons." The statement also asserted that Bahrain was witnessing a "security void" that was imputable to the "disappearance of the institutions of the State that were supposed to protect citizens." Al Wefaq claimed that these armed groups were associated with the government security agencies, since the latter took no measures to confront the armed groups that were blocking roads and setting up roadblocks and checkpoints.

481. In another response to the developments of the day, the GFBTU issued a statement calling for a general strike in Bahrain.

482. Among the other significant events of the day was the increase in both the number and intensity of attacks against foreign expatriate workers, particularly those of South Asian origin. Late in the evening, a group of individuals entered a residential building in Manama that was mostly inhabited by Asian workers. Those individuals began attacking residents, among whom was a Pakistani citizen named Mr Abdul Malik Gholam Rasul, who was violently beaten to death. Later, Mr Farid Maqbul was attacked and sustained severe injuries from which he subsequently died. As the night proceeded, more cases of attacks against Asian expatriates were recorded. A Pakistani *Muethini*, Sheikh Orfan Mohamed Ahmed, was attacked by a group of individuals who violently assaulted him causing severe injuries, including deep lacerations to his tongue.²⁴⁹

483. Allegations were made that when some of these Asian expatriate workers were taken to SMC they were denied medical treatment, were verbally and physically abused and called mercenaries by some of the protesters gathered at the car park adjacent to the emergency department and allegedly also by some medical staff. Many of those individuals were later transferred to BDF Hospital for treatment.

²⁴⁸ See Chapter VII, Section C.

²⁴⁹ See Chapter VIII, Section A.

484. That night, as the security situation and law and order in Bahrain continued to deteriorate, the Gathering of National Unity and the seven opposition political societies (Al Wefaq, Wa'ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assemblage, the Nationalist Democratic Society, Al-Ikha' National Society and the Al-Menbar Progressive Democratic Society) held a meeting at the headquarters of Al Wefaq. At the conclusion of the meeting, which lasted for five hours, a short statement was issued in which the participants condemned the inter-communal clashes that had occurred throughout the day in Bahrain, called on the people not to confront their fellow citizens and warned against the dangers of sectarianism.

485. That day, HRH the Crown Prince issued a statement in which he outlined the principles that should govern the proposed political dialogue. The statement was issued in light of what HRH the Crown Prince considered to be the shifting positions of the opposition parties. This statement included the following:

- a. The safety and security of the people of Bahrain comes above any other consideration, and the “legitimacy of demands must not come at the expense of security and stability”.
- b. Considerable efforts have been exerted to create “effective links between all the various parties and national groups to understand their opinions and views in regard to national matters”, and this reflects the commitment to starting a comprehensive national dialogue.
- c. HRH the Crown Prince accepts the following principles within the dialogue:
 - i. A parliament with full authority;
 - ii. A government that represents the will of the people;
 - iii. Naturalisation;
 - iv. Fair voting districts;
 - v. Combating corruption;
 - vi. State property; and
 - vii. Addressing sectarian tension.

These are in addition to other principles and approaches for national dialogue.

- d. HRH the Crown Prince stresses the importance of the immediate acceptance of the national dialogue and confirms that “there is no objection to presenting what will be agreed upon in the dialogue in a special referendum reflecting the united will of the people”.

486. That afternoon, HRH the Crown Prince and two of his representatives consulted with Sheikh Issa Qassim, a leading Shia cleric, on the 12 March

MoU and obtained his endorsement of that document as a basis for the proposed national dialogue. As HRH the Crown Prince and his associates set off to the meeting, they were contacted and advised that the Crown Prince should not attend the meeting. Therefore, HRH the Crown Prince's representatives proceeded alone to the meeting, which was held at the residence of Sheikh Abdulla Al-Ghurafi. During the meeting, the representatives of HRH the Crown Prince explained that they were seeking Sheikh Issa Qassim's blessing of the 12 March MoU so that Al Wefaq could join the national dialogue on that basis. Sheikh Issa Qassim seemed unaware of the existence of the MoU or the seven principles announced by HRH the Crown Prince, and stated that he did not have control over the streets. Sheikh Issa Qassim affirmed that while his role was religious rather than political, it was his view that the solution to the ongoing crisis should be the election of a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution.

487. After this meeting, the representative of HRH the Crown Prince met with Al Wefaq Secretary General Sheikh Ali Salman to urge him to endorse the 12 March MoU and accept the seven principles included in HRH the Crown Prince's statement. Sheikh Ali Salman reiterated that there was no need to enter into a dialogue with the GoB, and that the election of a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution was the only solution to the unfolding crisis. Later that evening, HRH the Crown Prince called Sheikh Ali Salman to persuade him to reconsider his position. Sheikh Salamn reiterated the views he had expressed earlier that day.

488. At that point, HRH the Crown Prince and his team concluded that the opposition was not interested in engaging in a dialogue with the GoB. In the view of HRH the Crown Prince and his team, the insistence by the opposition on the drafting of a new constitution by an elected Constituent Assembly would allow the opposition, which espoused a more conservative and religious outlook, to dominate the Constituent Assembly. The view of HRH the Crown Prince was that a constitution drafted by this assembly would alienate other members of Bahraini society. Therefore, the position adopted by Sheikh Issa Qassim and Sheikh Ali Salman was unacceptable to HM the King and HRH the Crown Prince.

489. A group of independent members of the Council of Representatives issued a statement calling on HM King Hamad to declare a State of Martial Law and to order the intervention of the BDF to maintain security and stability in Bahrain, protect private and public property and confront any illegal acts that incite violence, terrorism, harassment of individuals, sectarianism, disruption of social order, harming the national economy or threatening the national interest of Bahrain. The statement urged HM the King to impose a curfew to be enforced by the BDF. It also urged the King to intervene "at this critical juncture after the opposition rejected the calls to maintain calm and the invitations to enter into a dialogue, and instead resorted to escalation and sectarian incitement, which threatened the breakdown of security." The statement warned against the continuation of "provocative" unauthorised daily demonstrations and rallies, which were threatening to lead to a "civil war".

This, according to the statement, necessitated the immediate intervention of the BDF to contain the situation and maintain law and order in Bahrain.

490. That night, HM King Hamad concluded that Bahrain required the assistance of military forces from neighbouring GCC countries. This decision was taken, *inter alia*, due to the general breakdown of security and law and order that Bahrain had suffered during the previous days, especially on 13 March, the increasing intensity and frequency of attacks against citizens, foreign nationals and private and public property, and the expanding scope of demonstrations and protests which, in the view of the authorities, were obstructing vital services and facilities. In addition, the GoB considered that the presence of these GCC forces would deter against what it believed could be a possible intervention in the internal affairs of Bahrain by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Monday, 14 March 2011

491. The state of security and law and order in Bahrain further deteriorated throughout the day. Groups of vandals and gangs of individuals armed with knives, swords and other weapons were reported in many of Bahrain's cities and villages. A number of assaults against expatriate workers were also recorded, as well as several attacks against police officers. Fearing for their lives and property, more citizens organised checkpoints to monitor activity and traffic in their neighbourhoods.

492. Groups of unidentified individuals carrying light weapons of various types, such as knives, swords, metal rods and wooden planks, were reported in many parts of Bahrain during the day. For example, early in the morning, a small bus that had been seized from an Asian expatriate worker and a truck were used to block the Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah Street in Sitra. Similarly, in A'Ali a number of streets, including Road 36, were blocked using trucks and other vehicles, while in other parts of that neighbourhood, such as the Sheikh Zayed Street, gangs of armed vandals were reported to have been roaming the streets and harassing passers-by. In Hamad Town, checkpoints were set up near Roundabout 22 where it was alleged that armed individuals had attacked and harassed persons thought to be Sunni. Also in Hamad Town, a large gathering of persons near Roundabout 5 set up a checkpoint and reportedly attacked and assaulted passers-by who they thought were Sunni.

493. Meanwhile, starting from the early hours of the morning, checkpoints were reported in various areas of the predominantly Sunni district of Al-Riffa, where the Royal Palace and the residences of Bahrain's senior leadership are located. Some of these checkpoints, especially in the vicinity of the Sa'aa roundabout were monitoring traffic and denying access to the neighbourhood to persons who were not residents or thought to be Shia. As the day progressed, unidentified armed individuals also manned checkpoints in Al-Riffa and other Sunni-majority neighbourhoods. In some cases, these checkpoints witnessed sectarian confrontations. For example, reports indicated that at 23:20, around 150 residents of Al-Riffa armed with knives, swords, and similar weapons clashed with a group of individuals from the Sanad district in the vicinity of the Elwy Complex. Meanwhile, more clashes

between groups of Sunni and Shia individuals were recorded in other places, including in the vicinity of the Issa Town Medical Centre, Nowedirat, Al Dair, and Samaheej. The level of violence recorded in these sectarian clashes varied depending on the number of individuals involved. In most cases, injuries such as knife cuts, stabs, and bruises were reported.

494. On a number of occasions during the day, gangs of armed individuals prevented government and private sector employees from entering their workplaces. For example, reports indicated that at 08:15 a group of armed individuals had prevented employees of the Bahrain and Kuwait Bank from entering the bank. Unidentified persons prevented employees from leaving the premises of the Ministry of Justice at 11:15.

495. Many commercial establishments were attacked during the day. For example, starting at 11:40, groups of unidentified individuals harassed shop owners in the Sheikh Mohamed Road in Manama and compelled them to close their shops. Similarly, in Al-Riffa, a popular coffee shop was vandalised and a small fire was lit in a convenience store.

496. During the day, a number of cases of assault against unarmed police were recorded. Among these was an attack at 10:00 by approximately 10 individuals on a police officer in Motanaby Street in the vicinity of the NSA headquarters. A similar incident was reported at the same time when unidentified individuals attacked a police officer on patrol in the Salmaniya district. The victims of both these attacks were hospitalised. At 16:28, a police patrol reported being attacked in Sahla by a group of individuals armed with knives and swords, injuring at least one police officer. Another police patrol was attacked later that night by individuals manning a checkpoint in Issa Town. Furthermore, a number of police officers and employees of security agencies reported that their homes had been the target of attacks and incidents of vandalism. Examples of these incidents include a report filed by an NSA employee claiming to have been under siege in his home in Issa Town, and a claim by a police lieutenant to have been harassed at his residence in Sanad.

497. As a sign of the further deterioration of security in Bahrain, inmates in the Hawd Al-Jaf (Dry Dock) Detention Centre began to cause disturbances and managed to break out of the facility. It is unclear whether confrontations occurred between the prison security and the inmates. In total, 109 inmates escaped from the prison. Reports indicated that some of those attempted to escape by sea, but were later captured by Coast Guard units. Other inmates attempted to leave the area using a small bus, while some hid in the buildings of a nearby company. By 17:30, security forces had apprehended most of the inmates who had escaped.

498. These and similar incidents were reported throughout the day by the news media and further disseminated by internet social networking sites. This exacerbated an already heightened sense of insecurity among Bahrainis and foreign nationals. Developments of the previous days, particularly the crippling of traffic in Manama due to the blocking of the King Faisal Highway, the presence of gangs of armed vandals throughout Bahrain, the

inability and, according to some claims, the unwillingness of the police to impose order and confront these armed groups, and the targeting of expatriate workers, inevitably led to a sense of complete loss of security in the country. Residents in many neighbourhoods, including those of mixed composition and those having either Shia or Sunni majorities, were compelled to fend for themselves and organise committees to maintain security. This led Bahrainis and foreign residents to feel that the GoB was no longer capable of ensuring their safety and that Bahrain was on the verge of a total breakdown of law and order.

499. Reports from the GCC Roundabout and its immediate vicinity indicated that certain individuals were fortifying the barricades placed to block traffic on the main thoroughfares of the area and on the roads leading to the roundabout. Palm trees, lamp posts, plastic barriers, rubble, rocks and mounds of sand from nearby construction sites were placed across the King Faisal Highway and the Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Road to obstruct traffic. In some areas, trenches were also dug to prevent vehicles from entering the area. Roadblocks were also reported in the vicinity of the premises of the Council of Ministers and the nearby streets. Furthermore, reports suggested that certain individuals were using electrical wiring to create booby-traps on the overpass adjacent to the GCC Roundabout and in the vicinity of the Bahrain Financial Harbour. The total number of protesters reported to have been at the GCC Roundabout during the day exceeded 10,000.

500. At 17:30, Gulf Air announced that it was suspending its flights to Iran and Iraq. No reasons were given publicly for this decision.

501. The GCC Jazeera Shield Forces (GCC-JSF) arrived in Bahrain that evening. The first formations to enter Bahrain were units from the Saudi Arabian Royal Guard, which crossed into Bahrain from the King Fahd Causeway at 18:20. More units from the United Arab Emirates and the State of Qatar arrived in the following days. The GCC-JSF was ordered to assist Bahraini units in the protection of vital installations and sites in various parts of the country, particularly the oil fields in the south. These forces were also instructed to be prepared to assist in the defence of Bahrain against any foreign intervention. Later in the week, naval formations from the State of Kuwait executed reconnaissance and patrolling missions off the coast of Bahrain.

502. On learning of the arrival of the GCC-JSF, the former First Deputy President of the Council of Representatives and Al Wefaq member Mr Khalil Al-Marzouq issued a statement expressing the view that the use of GCC forces to “confront popular demands was illegitimate and devoid of legal bases.” The statement added that the invitation extended to foreign forces was “only explainable as a sign that the governing authority of Bahrain considers itself to have lost all legitimacy and to be unrecognised to an extent that it was unable to address the internal situation, which compelled it to request Gulf assistance.”

503. Meanwhile, it was reported that during a meeting with the Gathering for National Unity, the Al Wefaq Secretary General, Sheikh Ali Salman,

reacted to the news by saying that he would request Iranian assistance. Later in the day, Sheikh Ali Salman issued a press release affirming that the statements attributed to him were fallacious and baseless. Sheikh Ali Salman also rejected all forms of foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Bahrain. He later explained that during the meeting he had expressed the view that inviting the GCC-JSF was a “strategic mistake” because it internationalised an internal crisis and provided the Islamic Republic of Iran with a pretext to intervene in Bahrain.

504. The 14 February Youth Group issued a statement, which it circulated on internet social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter, to announce that the main roads and highways in the vicinity of the GCC Roundabout would be opened. This included the King Faisal Highway and the Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Road. The statement noted that these youth groups “were aware of the extent of the deliberate misrepresentation and tarnishing that was occurring against their peaceful movement, which had impressed the world with its civility”. The statement also noted that measures to threaten civilians and undermine their interests were not among the objectives or activities of the 14 February Youth.

505. Early that evening, the leader of the Gathering of National Unity, Sheikh Abdullatif Al-Mahmoud, held a press conference in which he outlined his views on the recent developments in Bahrain and on the political negotiations between HRH the Crown Prince and opposition parties. Sheikh Al-Mahmoud’s remarks included the following points:

- a. There is no need to declare a State of Martial Law, as some political figures have suggested. The GoB is capable of regaining control of the situation in Bahrain and restoring order.
- b. Bahrain is part of the GCC community, and any intervention from outside that community is unacceptable.
- c. The situation in Bahrain is alarming, especially in light of the clashes that are occurring in the various cities and villages.
- d. The meeting between the Gathering of National Unity and the opposition parties that was held yesterday at the headquarters of Al Wefaq reached a “dead-end”. The principal difference between the participants is that the opposition insists on the election of a Constituent Assembly that would not include any representatives of the regime. The Gathering of National Unity, on the other hand, considers the representation of the regime indispensable in any Constituent Assembly.
- e. The Gathering of National Unity also differs from the opposition in that the latter insists on discussing the pre-conditions and principles of the proposed national dialogue, and favours an immediate beginning of the dialogue the results of which should be presented to the people for approval through a popular referendum.

- f. The Gathering of National Unity considers Al Wefaq responsible for what was occurring in Bahrain, especially since Al Wefaq has the ability to calm the people because the majority of teachers and the Secretary General of the GFBTU are among its members.
- g. It is the view of the Gathering of National Unity that the following matters should be the subject of debate during the proposed national dialogue:
 - i. The concept of a “constitutional monarchy”;
 - ii. Revision of the 2002 Constitution;
 - iii. The bi-cameral legislature:
 - 1. The powers of the Council of Representatives;
 - 2. The powers of the Consultative Council;
 - 3. The relationship between the Council of Representatives and the Consultative Council;
 - 4. Electoral districts;
 - 5. Electoral systems and the representation of Sunnis; and
 - 6. The entity empowered to draft the internal regulations of the Council of Representatives and the Consultative Council;
 - iv. The executive branch of government:
 - 1. Nominating the Prime Minister;
 - 2. Nominating Cabinet Ministers;
 - 3. Conditions required for nomination to the Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet Minister;
 - 4. The relationship between the King and the legislature, and the approval of the government program;
 - 5. Holding the Prime Minister accountable; and
 - 6. Holding Cabinet Ministers accountable;
 - v. The judicial branch of government:
 - 1. The relationship between the judiciary and the Ministry of Justice;
 - 2. The composition of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary and its Chairperson; and
 - 3. Prerequisites for the appointment of judges;

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- vi. The relationship between the ruling family and the State;
- vii. Financial and administrative oversight;
- viii. Naturalisation;
- ix. Enforcing the Financial Statements Law on employees of the executive and legislative branches of government and those in senior positions;
- x. Civil liberties and religious freedoms;
- xi. National income;
- xii. State properties;
- xiii. Preserving national wealth;
- xiv. The relationship between municipalities and governorates;
- xv. Increasing wages and pensions;
- xvi. Housing;
- xvii. Social security;
- xviii. Employment policies and addressing unemployment;
- xix. Moral, financial and administrative corruption;
- xx. Addressing sectarianism; and
- xxi. Addressing sectarian tension.

506. The Coalition for the Republic issued a statement that included the following:

- a. What the regime has announced so far in the name of dialogue is nothing but empty declarations in a desperate attempt to respond to, protract and stall the revolution. Ironically, this attempt coincides with the regime's escalation of suppression and use of armed government thugs against peaceful citizens, including women and children, and the use of foreign military forces to engage governments of neighbouring countries in the losing battle to keep their thrones propping oppressive monarchies. Thus, the false call for dialogue using empty rhetoric does not change the reality of the situation and will not tempt any of the people or the opposition parties to abandon the people's demands for real and complete change.
- b. The involvement of military forces of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and neighbouring countries to contribute to the suppression of a peaceful and popular revolution is an interference in the internal affairs of Bahrain and has no legal justification, as the military defence agreement for the GCC is

to repel external aggression and not to suppress the peoples of these countries who demand freedom and democracy. This contradicts the philosophy of the Council to promote cooperation between the peoples of the GCC countries and not to fuel sectarianism, which invites the interference of other forces in the region. Therefore, any presence of GCC military forces in Bahrain is an illegal occupation that aims to suppress the will of the people, and troops should be withdrawn immediately. Experience has shown that the security and military options will not succeed in breaking the will of the people in Bahrain or in ending their peaceful revolution.

- c. The GoB holds complete responsibility for the horrific crimes committed by the armed government thugs rampaging and reigning terror from the east to the west of Bahrain using guns, rifles, swords, knives and other sharp objects, which have resulted in tens of serious injuries. These severe violations of human rights will be among the crimes for which this GoB will be prosecuted. The use of government thugs has not convinced anyone that there are sectarian clashes as the regime intended to show, nor has it provoked people into abandoning their peaceful movement which has so far made them victorious over military and security forces and will also, god-willing, make them victorious over government thugs. We have seen how the attacks of these thugs have led to an initiative of forming popular committees and safety patrols in different areas and villages across the country to protect the population, while being peaceful and civilised as is now the trademark of this revolution and its revolutionaries. This is an important step towards the collapse of the regime and the transfer of power to the people.
- d. These latest developments, from acts of repression in recent days as well as foreign military intervention, coincided with the visit of US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates to Bahrain. This raises many questions about America's role in the current situation and makes it a partner in what is going on from violations of human rights to denying the Bahraini people their legitimate right to democracy and freedom.
- e. The Alliance for the Republic demands that the United Nations, the international community and international organisations assume their responsibility in monitoring what is happening in Bahrain and supporting the peaceful popular movement and its rightful demands. Furthermore, all measures must be taken to record and document the violations of the regime, the intended absence of law and order and the legality of the Saudi invasion of Bahrain. The international community must condemn in clear language the actions of

this regime, and it must send fact-finding missions to investigate what is happening on the ground.

- f. The Coalition supports the popular and open strikes by students, workers and professionals. Moreover, the Coalition supports acts of organised and peaceful civil disobedience announced by 14 February youth groups. These strikes and acts of civil disobedience are the way to achieve major demands for which the people have already made sacrifices.

Tuesday, 15 March 2011

507. In light of the general deterioration of the state of security throughout Bahrain, HM King Hamad issued Royal Decree No. 18 of 2011 declaring a State of National Safety for three months throughout the territory of the Kingdom of Bahrain.²⁵⁰ In accordance with this decree, Bahraini authorities and law enforcement agencies began to adopt a more forceful approach towards both demonstrators and individuals partaking in acts of vandalism or causing disorder.

508. During the day, violent clashes were reported between police and individuals in various areas of Bahrain. A number of civilian and police fatalities were recorded, in addition to large numbers of injuries on both sides. The day was also marked by the continued blocking of main roads in many neighbourhoods, the setting up of checkpoints at the entries to a number of districts, and the reporting of numerous assaults on passers-by and civilians in various areas.

509. Shortly after midnight, residents of Issa Town apprehended a number of individuals who were attempting to overturn a garbage dumpster and set its contents on fire in the vicinity of Complex 816. In Al-Budayie, reports indicated that, at around 03:30, an unidentified individual fired gunshots in the air and attempted to run over passers-by with his car. Around the same time, a police patrol that was attempting to open blocked roads in the same area was attacked by unidentified individuals with Molotov cocktails.

510. At around 01:00, the headquarters of the Al-Wasat newspaper were vandalised by unidentified individuals and a number of its employees were assaulted.

511. Reports indicated that, starting in the early hours of the day and continuing throughout the morning, roadblocks were set up by individuals in many areas of Manama and other cities and neighbourhoods. For example, starting at 02:00, a number of persons armed with sticks and metal rods manned a checkpoint in Dar Kulaib. At around 02:45, a police patrol was dispatched to remove this checkpoint and arrest the individuals responsible for setting it up. During the operation, at least one police officer was injured when his patrol car collided with the fence of a nearby house as they chased the individuals at the checkpoint. Similarly, a group of persons blocked Al-

²⁵⁰ See Chapter III, Sections F, G and H for an overview and analysis of Royal Decree 18 of 2011 on the Declaration of a State of National Safety in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Qasr Street at the entry to Ras Ruman at around 03:00. A few hours later, reports indicated that a large truck was used to deny entry to the Buri District. Meanwhile, it was reported that two buses were used at 07:20 to block the entry into Road 1 in Sitra. Later that morning, a group of around 30 persons was reported to have blocked the roads in the vicinity of the Ibn Sina Medical Centre in Ras Ruman and assaulted passers-by.

512. Reports indicated that by noon groups of unidentified individuals were stopping and searching cars at a checkpoint at the entry to the Al-Ma'ameer district. Meanwhile, in Al-Muharraq a roadblock was set up near Akher Forsa to search cars and individuals attempting to enter the area. In A'Ali, a checkpoint was set up by individuals at around 12:30 in the vicinity of the A'Aali residential complex. Two other checkpoints were reported at the entry to the Saar District and on the Zeid bin 'Emira Road at the entrance to the Malekeyya District.

513. At various points during the day, trucks and other vehicles were reported to have been seen transporting what appeared to be gas cylinders to the vicinity of the GCC Roundabout and the Bahrain Financial Harbour. Otherwise, protesters continued to flock to the GCC Roundabout, where many denounced the invitation extended to the GCC-JSF and continued to call for the removal of the regime. The total number of protesters at the roundabout during the day reached around 15,000.

514. Throughout the morning and afternoon hours, clashes occurred between individuals and police units in Sitra. Civilians, mainly young men and teenagers, gathered in various areas of Sitra to either organise anti-government rallies or set up checkpoints and roadblocks to deny police patrols access to that district. Police patrols were dispatched to the area to clear roads, disperse demonstrators and restore law and order to the area. Police used sound bombs, tear gas and shotgun rounds during these clashes.

515. At 13:00, a large group of individuals was reported to be blocking traffic and searching vehicles in the area adjacent to the Development Bank on Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah Road. Later, persons from neighbouring areas, including Al-Ekr Al-Sharky and Al-Ma'ameer, joined the individuals gathered in Sitra. Police were ordered to disperse these demonstrators. During this operation, police officer Ahmed Rashid Al-Murisi was attacked and run over by two men driving a private vehicle. Mr Al-Murisi was severely injured and was pronounced dead later that afternoon at BDF Hospital.²⁵¹ Two other police officers sustained severe injuries when they were run over by a private vehicle. Later, at 15:15, another police officer was injured when he was hit by a car on Road 1 in Sitra.

516. As police continued to disperse demonstrators and to clear roadblocks and checkpoints set up in the vicinity of Road 1 in Sitra, clashes occurred between police and a number of individuals. These clashes led to the death of Mr Ahmed Farhan Al-Farhan. While the exact circumstances of this case are the subject of an ongoing investigation by the MoI, police reports claimed that

²⁵¹ See Chapter VI Section A.

at around 15:20 the deceased was shot while driving a white vehicle and attempting to run over a police officer deployed in the area. Conversely, witness statements indicate that the victim was participating in a peaceful demonstration, which MoI units were dispersing, and he was running away from police when he sustained fatal injuries to his head, legs and back caused by shotgun pellets.²⁵²

517. As clashes between MoI units and protesters subsided, at around 21:00, a police patrol was ordered to transport three individuals who had been detained during the day to Al Wusta police station. By 21:30, the assigned police patrol had executed its orders and delivered those three individuals to the police station. Among those detained was Mr Isa Radhi Abdali Ahmed Alradhi, who according to MoI reports, had sustained head injuries. The next day, Mr Alradhi was pronounced dead at BDF Hospital due to injuries to his head and skull and an internal brain haemorrhage.²⁵³

518. During the day, reports from other areas indicated that unidentified individuals had attempted to run over and attack police. For example, an MoI Special Forces Unit was attacked at around 19:00 by a bus on Road 38 in A'Ali. One police officer was killed and 16 injured during the day in Sitra. Three other police officers were injured in Nowiderat and in the vicinity of Roundabout 22, bringing the total number of injured police to 19.

519. As the security situation continued to deteriorate throughout the day, and attacks by unidentified persons on civilians were reported by the official media and then circulated by social networking websites, residents of many neighbourhoods resorted to setting up checkpoints and roadblocks at the entrances to their neighbourhoods. These areas included Roundabouts 10 and 20 in Hamad Town, Al-Deraz and the entry to Bani Jamra. The heightened sense of apprehension and general insecurity that Bahrainis and foreign workers felt led to clashes at many of these checkpoints as residents denied people who did not appear to reside in the neighbourhood and who were suspected to be vandals access to their neighbourhoods.

520. It was reported that two mosques were attacked at around 15:50. These were the Majbal and the Befrij Al-Fadel Mosques in Manama.

521. As in previous days, a number of expatriate workers, most of whom were of South Asian origin, were attacked and harassed by groups of unidentified individuals. At approximately midday, a Bangladeshi national named Mr Mohammad Ikhlas Tozzomul Ali was killed when he was run over by a car in Sitra. Three other Bangladeshi workers were also injured in that incident.

522. Starting at 15:15, a rally of over 8000 individuals proceeded down the King Faisal Highway towards the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Diplomatic Area. The demonstrators were protesting against the deployment of the GCC-JSF that had arrived in Bahrain the previous day.

²⁵² See Chapter VI Section A.

²⁵³ See Chapter VI Section A.

523. Meanwhile, in Tehran, the Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran stated, “The presence of foreign forces and the interference in Bahrain’s internal affairs is unacceptable, and will further complicate the issue.” The Spokesperson added, “The people of Bahrain have demands that are legitimate and are being expressed peacefully.”

524. Four members of the Consultative Council announced their resignation from the Council. These resignations were later withdrawn.

525. As part of its mediation efforts between the GoB of Bahrain and the seven main opposition parties, the United States dispatched Ambassador Jeffery D. Feltman, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, to Manama to examine the potential for reaching an agreement between the two sides. The consultations that were undertaken led to the drafting of a document entitled, “Code of Conduct – To be Sponsored by a Regional Leader, with the US GoB Acting as Observer”. The document included the following points:

- a. Al Wefaq and its National Coalition allies will immediately orchestrate the removal of barricades and protesters from all highways and from all roads in Manama. Protesters will maintain a peaceful and orderly presence at the GCC Roundabout.
- b. The BDF and MoI will implement an operation to ensure that all highways are fully accessible to the general public.
- c. The BDF and MoI will immediately implement an operation to terminate all “vigilante” activity, followed by the dismantling of all illegal roadblocks and checkpoints.
- d. The BDF Commander and ranking GCC Forces Commander will issue a statement clarifying the deployment of army units (i.e. to sensitive locations only), as well as rules of engagement.
- e. Al Wefaq and its National Coalition allies agree:
 - i. To join immediately a genuine and credible national dialogue process that addresses the concerns and aspirations of all Bahraini citizens; and
 - ii. To orchestrate the full withdrawal of protesters from the GCC Roundabout within four weeks or once the National Coalition declares that discernable progress is being made in the national dialogue process, whichever is sooner.
- f. The GoB of Bahrain announces:
 - i. The right for peaceful and orderly protests to continue;
 - ii. The temporary shuttering of Bahrain Television;
 - iii. The release of all remaining “political prisoners”; and

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- iv. The intent to form an interim government within 60 days.
- g. The “Public Safety” Decree will be annulled and the GCC Forces will withdraw from Bahrain if there are no violent incidents.

526. According to opposition sources, Al Wefaq and the other political societies accepted this US proposal, while the GoB of Bahrain did not respond to this initiative.

527. According to opposition sources, it was suggested that the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, HE Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani, could act as the sponsor of the proposed United States initiative. Opposition sources also indicated that the Emir of the State of Qatar, HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, attempted to mediate between the GoB of Bahrain and opposition parties in the following days, and that this initiative was accepted by the opposition but rejected by the GoB.

Wednesday, 16 March 2011

528. During the day, the GoB of Bahrain took active steps to address the general state of insecurity and the breakdown of law and order that had existed for several days throughout Bahrain. In addition, measures were taken to put down the demonstrations and political protests that had been taking place in various areas of Manama and neighbouring cities and villages.

529. The most significant events of the day were the second clearing operation at the GCC Roundabout and the clearing of protesters from both the Bahrain Financial Harbour and SMC. At 05:00, the BDF Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, arrived at the staging area that had been prepared for the operation to the north east of the GCC Roundabout. The BDF Commander-in-Chief oversaw the overall operation, which had been divided into three phases and was executed primarily by police. In addition, units from the National Guard were deployed to provide assistance and support the police. The BDF deployed a number of its armed units to provide general theatre protection for the advancing forces. The BDF units were also ordered to be prepared to defend against any possible foreign intervention. These units remained under the operational control of each of their respective field commanders and agency heads. The total number of personnel deployed for the operation exceeded 5000. The Royal Bahraini Air Force deployed two Bell AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters and two Bell 212 Twin Huey helicopters. These aircraft were neither involved in any assaults nor did they fire any of their weapons during the operation.

530. The first phase of the operation, which commenced at 05:30, began with the use of a megaphone to order the protesters camped at the GCC Roundabout to vacate the area. Most of the demonstrators left the roundabout, but one group of protesters decided to stay. Therefore, police began approaching the roundabout from several directions, including from underneath the overpass adjacent to the roundabout and from the direction of

the Geant Shopping Mall. The operation was planned so as to leave three exit routes open through which protesters could leave the roundabout. As in other operations, police were armed with sticks, shields, tear gas, sound bombs and shotguns. The BDF Commander-in-Chief ordered the police not to use firearms during the operation. The police were also accompanied by a number of armoured personnel carriers and two armoured trucks equipped with water cannons.

531. The advancing police first cleared a series of roadblocks that demonstrators had set up using lampposts, mounds of sand and rubble, palm trees, garbage dumpsters, plastic traffic barriers and metal barricades. As the police entered the GCC Roundabout, they used tear gas and sound bombs to compel the remaining protesters to vacate the area. At this point a number of Molotov cocktails were thrown at the advancing police forces. In addition, some of the protesters set fire to the tents and canopies that had been set up at the roundabout. These fires were put out first by the MoI water-cannons and then by fire trucks that were dispatched to the area. Meanwhile, formations from the BDF and the National Guard fanned out to secure the flanks of the advancing police and secure the entry points to the roundabout. BDF engineers and armoured units also advanced down the King Faisal Highway and the Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Road to remove booby-traps that were feared to have been placed there during the previous days and to clear roadblocks and other objects obstructing traffic. By 07:46, the roundabout was under the full control of government forces.

532. Upon entering the GCC Roundabout and the adjacent areas, units from all three armed services participating in the operation (police, BDF and National Guard) began searching for booby-traps, explosives and other weapons that were left in the area. This search uncovered large numbers of Molotov cocktails, metal rods, knives, and other sharp objects.

533. As police continued to search the GCC Roundabout and the surrounding areas, two police officers, Mr 'Asheq Ahmed Mansour and Mr Mohamed Farouk Abdulsamad, were run over multiple times at 08:00 by an SUV in the open area to the west of the roundabout. Both police officers died onsite.

534. Following the clearing of the GCC Roundabout, phase two of the operation began, which aimed to clear the Bahrain Financial Harbour and the nearby roads of demonstrators and roadblocks. Like the first phase, this part of the operation was executed primarily by police supported and flanked by BDF and National Guard units. As these forces proceeded, some of the protesters in the area exploded gas cylinders in an attempt to hinder the advance of these units. Nonetheless, the number of protesters remaining in that area was significantly less than at the GCC Roundabout, and consequently the location was cleared of protesters relatively quickly. No servicemen were injured during this phase of the operation.

535. Phase three of the operation involved clearing SMC of protesters and persons camped in the parking area adjacent to the Emergency Section. The objective was to regain control of the facility. This operation, which began at

09:20, was undertaken by police with assistance from the BDF and National Guard. The participating units proceeded from the GCC Roundabout, which by now was under the control of the BDF and National Guard, towards SMC. Upon their arrival at SMC, police and military personnel entered the facility, while National Guard units secured the perimeter. The parking area was cleared and then police entered SMC buildings, beginning with the Emergency Section. The security units that entered the SMC buildings were armed with sticks, shields, handguns and, in some cases, assault rifles.

536. MoI reports indicate that Molotov cocktails and weapons such as knives, swords, and metal rods were found at the entrances to SMC. These reports also indicate that a detachment of police and military personal that was searching the car park adjacent to the Accident and Emergency Department were assaulted by a group of individuals. Five of those individuals were arrested.

537. At 13:00, the BDF General Command issued a statement announcing that units from the Public Security Forces and the National Guard had, with assistance from the BDF, removed from the GCC Roundabout, the Bahrain Financial Harbour and SMC outlaws who had terrorised citizens and undermined the national economy. This operation, according to the statement, was executed with professionalism. The BDF General Command congratulated all citizens for the beginning of the return to normality, and affirmed that it would take all necessary measures to enforce security and public order in order to protect the nation and its citizens.

538. At 16:00, the BDF General Command issued its second statement of the day, in which it announced the imposition of a curfew from 16:00 to 04:00 for an indefinite period in the area between the Al-Seef Overpass and the Sheikh Issa bin Salman Al Khalifa Bridge. An area of 400 metres on both sides of this zone was also included in the curfew. In addition, all gatherings, assemblies, rallies, sit-ins and demonstrations were prohibited throughout Bahrain.

539. As these operations were being undertaken, clashes were reported between security forces and groups of individuals in many parts of Bahrain. Police units were deployed in many areas in an attempt to restore order, end protests and remove checkpoints and roadblocks that had been set up by the residents of many neighbourhoods. Among the areas that witnessed confrontations between police and individuals were Hamad Town, where clashes occurred in the vicinity of Sheikh Hamad Road, Al-Ferdan Mosque and Roundabout 4. Clashes were also reported in Al-Deer, Samaheeg, Ras Ruman, Issa Town, A'Ali, Sheikh Issa Road in Athari, Sitra and Sanabis. In many of these locations, Molotov cocktails, rocks, metal rods and other objects were thrown at police. Many people also set fire to garbage dumpsters and placed barriers on the main roads of these neighbourhoods. Police patrols deployed to these areas used tear gas, rubber bullets, sound bombs and at times shotgun rounds to disperse crowds and to gain control of the situation.

540. Throughout the day, a number of police stations came under attack by unidentified individuals. These included the Al-Khamis, Al-Naeem and Al-

Shamaleyya police stations. At certain points during these attacks, Molotov cocktails were thrown at the police buildings.

541. Incidents of arson were also recorded during the day. The first, reported at 10:20, occurred when unidentified individuals entered and set fire to a farm in Karzakan belonging to the Royal Court. Shortly thereafter, it was reported that unidentified vandals had set fire to a wooden warehouse in the vicinity of the Al-Naeem cemetery. At around 13:40, another fire was reported in a furniture warehouse in Karzakan.

542. During the day, a number of civilian fatalities were reported. Some of these cases were imputable to BDF units, while in other cases police were implicated in the deaths. Due to the lack of security that Bahrain suffered during this period, the circumstances leading to these deaths remains unclear.

543. At 08:30, Mr Jaafar Mohamed Abdali Salman was pronounced dead due to a gunshot wound to the chest. The exact sequence of events causing this fatality is unclear. Some reports indicated that Mr Salman was shot in the vicinity of the Dana Mall, which is adjacent to the GCC Roundabout. He had gone to the area to photograph the ongoing events. Other reports, however, claimed that the deceased attempted to attack police in the area. Persons in the area transported the victim to the Jad Hafs hospital, where he was pronounced dead.²⁵⁴

544. Another civilian fatality that occurred during the day was Mr Ahmed Abdulla Hassan Ali. According to some reports, Mr Ali died of shotgun wounds that he had sustained at the GCC Roundabout. Other accounts, however, claimed that he was killed in confrontations with police at Roundabout 7 in Hamad Town.²⁵⁵

545. Meanwhile, at a BDF checkpoint that was set up near the overpass between the Al-Sahla district and Issa Town, another incident occurred that led to the death of an MoI employee named Mr Jawad Ali Kadhem. Available information indicates that the victim approached the BDF checkpoint in his vehicle, which he refused to stop despite being requested to do so over a megaphone by the military personnel onsite. When his vehicle came within 80 metres of the BDF armoured vehicle stationed at the checkpoint, BDF personnel fired rounds from a .50 Browning machine gun to disable the car. It later appeared that the shots had punctured the body of the vehicle and fatally injured the victim.²⁵⁶

546. At 18:00, Mr Jaafar Abdulla Ali Hasan Mayoof was pronounced dead due injuries sustained from gunshot and shotgun wounds. The exact circumstances of this fatality are unclear. According to some reports, the victim was injured by police dispersing demonstrations that were taking place in either the Magaba or the Al-Hajar districts. Other accounts claimed that Mr Mayoof was at the GCC Roundabout during the clearing operation, and that he had been shot but managed to reach the vicinity of the Sanabis

²⁵⁴ See Chapter VI, Section A.

²⁵⁵ See Chapter VI, Section A.

²⁵⁶ See Chapter VI, Section A.

neighbourhood, after which he was taken to a number of places, including Jad Hafs and Ibn Nafees. His family retrieved his body the next day from the SMC morgue.²⁵⁷

547. At around 19:15, Mr Stephen Abraham, an Indian citizen, who worked as a guard at the Awal Dairy Factory in the Al-Budayie' district, was fatally shot. Investigations subsequently revealed that he was shot in the lower chest by a bullet that was identical to that used by a BDF unit stationed in the area.²⁵⁸

548. At around 21:00, two BDF armoured vehicles on which .50 Browning machine guns were mounted were manning two checkpoints located above and below an overpass in the vicinity of the Burgerland restaurant in the Al-Budayie' district. When an SUV began approaching the checkpoint, the BDF unit used a megaphone to demand that the vehicle stop, and when it did not respond they used blinkers on their armoured vehicle to stop the advancing SUV. When this failed, the unit fired at the wheels of the advancing vehicle, bringing it to a halt. The passengers of the vehicle sustained light injuries. The BDF personnel at the scene noticed that another vehicle facing the opposite direction had stopped on the other side of the road. The unit approached it and found an injured woman in the driver's seat who had sustained severe injuries to the head. The victim, Mrs Baheya Abdelrasoul Al-Arady, was pronounced dead at BDF Hospital later that night.²⁵⁹

549. Reports indicated that, later in the evening, unidentified persons were painting (X) marks on the entrances of residences of BDF personnel. This was presumed to be a threat that the homes of these servicemen would be attacked by vandals.

550. Bahraini Minister of Housing, Mr Majeed Al-Alawi, announced on this day that he would be boycotting the GoB in light of the way it had handled recent events.

551. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran summoned the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Bahraini *Chargé d'Affaires* to present a formal protest against the deployment of the GCC-JSF in Bahrain. In addition, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran discussed the unfolding situation in Bahrain with the UN Secretary General, and called on the UN to take an active role regarding these developments.

Thursday, 17 March 2011

552. Starting on this day, the GoB began arresting many of the opposition figures who had led demonstrations during the past weeks. In the early hours of the day, the first group of these political and religious leaders was arrested pursuant to arrest warrants issued either by the BDF Commander-in-Chief or the Military Prosecutor General. Those arrested included Mr Hassan Almeshaima, Mr Ibrahim Sherif, Dr Abduljalil AlSankis, Mr Abdulwahab

²⁵⁷ See Chapter VI, Section A.

²⁵⁸ See Chapter VI, Section A.

²⁵⁹ See Chapter VI, Section A.

Hussein, Sheikh Saeed Merza Ahmed Al-Nouri, Sheikh Abdulhadi Abdulla Al-Makhdour and Mr Al-Hor Youssef Al-Semeekh. These individuals remained in the custody of the NSA until they were transferred to the Military Prosecution on 29 March 2011. Many of these individuals alleged that they were subjected to mistreatment during interrogation at the NSA detention facilities.²⁶⁰

553. Other political leaders were arrested by the NSA in the coming days and weeks, including Mr Mohamed Hassan Jawad, Mr Mohamed Reda Ismail, Sheikh Abduljalil Al-Mekdad, Mr Salah Abdulla Al-Khawaja, Sheikh Mohamed Habib Al-Safaf, Mr Merza Al-Mahrous and Mr Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja. All these individuals were arrested and interrogated by the NSA and remained in its custody for periods ranging between one and three weeks.

554. These arrests, many of which occurred in the early hours of the morning between 01:00 and 03:00, were mostly executed by teams of masked men at the homes of the arrested individuals. On a number of occasions, armed units from the MoI and the BDF accompanied these teams of security agents to provide perimeter security. In many cases, the arresting units forcefully entered the homes of these individuals, destroyed personal property, including cars, failed either to identify themselves or to inform the arrested individual of the reasons for arrest or to show arrest warrants, and acted in an aggressive and, at times, terrorising manner towards members of the household, including women and children.²⁶¹

555. During the day, government security agencies intensified their efforts to restore law and order in Bahrain. Extensive security operations were conducted to remove roadblocks and checkpoints and to reopen the major thoroughfares in Manama and neighbouring cities and villages. The MoI also intensified its riot control efforts in an attempt to end all forms of demonstrations and protests that were continuing in various areas of Bahrain. Police units dispatched to undertake these operations used their standard techniques and weapons, including tear gas, sound bombs, rubber bullets and shotgun rounds.

556. At 12:30, the BDF General Command issued a statement declaring that the curfew hours announced the previous day were reduced to the hours of 20:00 to 04:00. At 13:30, the BDF General Command issued another statement in which it announced the following:

In accordance with the authority granted to it pursuant to Royal Decree No. 18 of 2011 on the Declaration of a State of National Safety, a group of the leaders of discord who called for the removal of the regime and conspired on behalf of foreign countries have been arrested. These individuals have also incited during the recent events to the killing of citizens and the destruction of private and public property, which has undermined social peace and led to deaths among innocent citizens and

²⁶⁰ See Chapter VI, Section D.

²⁶¹ See Chapter VI, Section C.

residents. The BDF General Command will take all necessary legal measures in relation to these arrested individuals in accordance with the National Safety Decree and the laws applicable in the Kingdom.

557. Among the areas in which confrontations occurred between police and civilians were Dar Kulaib, Sitra, Al-Diah, Bilad Al-Qadeem, Al-Zeng, Abdel Karim Roundabout, Al-Malekeyya, Al-Ekr, Salamabad, Al-Khamis, Bani Jamra, Damistan and Hamad Town.

558. Many BDF and police personnel continued to report finding markings painted on the entrances to their residences, which were considered threats of retribution against them and their families.

559. MoI reports indicated that earlier that morning security forces arrested individuals alleged to have been vandals who had been disguised as patients in rooms 51, 52, 54, 55 and 56 of Ward 11. A team of journalists, allegedly working for the Al-Manar Channel, were arrested in rooms 63 and 64 on the sixth floor of SMC. Another group of individuals who were allegedly disguised as doctors was also arrested in rooms 307, 408 and 411 in the SMC Maternity Ward. At around 16:00, BDF personnel arrested Dr Ali Al-Ekri at SMC.

560. The seven main opposition parties (Al Wefaq, Wa'ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assemblage, the Nationalist Democratic Society, Al Ikha' National Society and the Al Menbar Progressive Democratic Society) held a joint press conference in which they announced the following:

- a. All mediation efforts between the opposition and the GoB, including those undertaken by both Bahraini and non-Bahraini parties, have been suspended in light of the declaration of a State of National Safety and the clearing of the GCC Roundabout.
- b. The opposition reiterates its call to form a Constituent Assembly before the commencement of the national dialogue. The opposition maintains its insistence on this demand, despite the GoB's resort to the language of "arms, bullets, tanks and rifles".
- c. The opposition rejects the "internationalisation" of the crisis in Bahrain.
- d. The "militarisation" of the situation in Bahrain must cease, and a neutral party must be allowed to investigate the events that occurred in Bahrain since 14 February 2011.
- e. Advisers to HRH the Crown Prince have made clear during the meeting held with the opposition parties on 13 March 2011 that "Bahrain will enter a new phase, and that the future will be dark, unless the opposition immediately enters into the dialogue".

- f. The total number of disappearances during the past two days has reached 85. As of this day, 65 persons continue to be unaccounted for.

561. The Minister of Health, Nizar Baharna, resigned from the GoB.

Friday, 18 March 2011

562. The GoB continued to ban demonstrations and protests throughout Bahrain. GoB security forces continued to work to restore order in many areas of Bahrain and to reopen roads and streets that had been blocked by protesters.

563. Security checkpoints were established in various areas of Bahrain, most of which were manned by police personnel. At many of these checkpoints, individuals were stopped and searched to determine whether they had participated in anti-government demonstrations. Many persons were arrested at these checkpoints for possessing articles such as political posters, signs and pictures of political leaders, or for listening to anti-government songs or recordings on their car radios. In some instances, drivers were stopped, searched and detained for beeping their car horns in a manner that replicated the slogan, “Down ... down Hamad”, which had become popular among protesters during the demonstrations of the past weeks. On a number of occasions, drivers and passers-by were detained because anti-government material, such as SMS messages or videos, was saved on their cellular phones, which were routinely confiscated and examined at these checkpoints.

564. People stopped at these checkpoints were subjected to various forms of mistreatment, such as pushing, shoving, kicking and beating with batons. Shia individuals, stopped at these checkpoints, were verbally abused because of their religious and sectarian beliefs.

565. A number of individuals were also arrested at SMC. One of those was arrested at 11:00 for carrying a knife in the vicinity of Gate 6 of SMC. Another was detained at 13:00 for carrying anti-government posters and leaflets.

566. The pearl monument at the centre of the GCC Roundabout was demolished and the roundabout was transformed into a juncture. The GoB announced that this change was to improve the flow of traffic in the area. One foreign worker was killed when one of the beams carrying the pearl at the top of the monument fell on the crane he was operating.

567. Clashes between police units and civilians were recorded in numerous areas as protesters attempted to organise demonstrations and rallies from their neighbourhoods. Protests and confrontations with police units were reported in areas including Karzakan, Bilad Al-Qadeem, Al-Nouiderat, Ras Ruman, Al-Mukharaqa, al-Juffair, Sanabis, Sitra, Bani Jamra, Hamad Town, Issa Town, Bouri, and Al-Mahooz.

568. Large numbers of people were arrested in many of the neighbourhoods that witnessed clashes between protesters and police units. Most of those arrested were youth below the age of 30 who were detained

while police units were dispersing protesters and gatherings of individuals. Arrested individuals were generally handcuffed behind their backs, blindfolded and transported to the closest police station where they were subjected to various forms of mistreatment the most common of which were beating, kicking, slapping, lashing with rubber hoses and verbal insults directed in particular at Shia religious beliefs and symbols.²⁶²

569. Other individuals were arrested by BDF and National Guard units that were stationed at various checkpoints in Manama and were enforcing the curfews imposed in the vicinity of the GCC Roundabout. Any persons arrested by these armed units were transferred to the custody of the closest police station.

570. The Speaker of the National Consultative Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr Ali Larijani, stated that “the treason of the Saudi regime and its massacres against the Muslim people of Bahrain will never be forgotten.” In addition, the Assistant to the Commander of the Iranian Air Force described events occurring in Bahrain as a “massacre”, and affirmed that “the Saudi Arabian army will regret its perpetration of these massacres.”

571. That evening, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, held a press conference in which he made the following observations:

- a. The GoB will not tolerate any acts of violence or vandalism or any threats to the lives of security personnel or BDF or National Guard officers, who are necessary for the country to return to normality and to resume plans for reform and development.
- b. Bahrain has restored order and security after being subjected to a “terrorist plot” that sought to undermine its security and stability. This terrorist plot has clear foreign connections and has been replicated in other parts of the region.
- c. HRH the Crown Prince has issued an unconditional invitation to engage in a national dialogue with all civil and political parties, in which all demands and proposals are open for discussion. HM King Hamad has taken a number of steps to pave the way for the success of the Crown Prince’s initiative, including pardoning convicted political leaders, allowing peaceful demonstrations and sit-ins, and withdrawing military and security forces from the streets.
- d. HRH the Crown Prince has consulted with all parties and invited them to submit their proposals and ideas for the national dialogue, which will be added to the agenda of that dialogue. All issues are open for discussion in this national dialogue. Most parties accepted the invitation for a dialogue,

²⁶² See Chapter VI, Section.

except the seven political opposition societies which placed preconditions and obstacles before this sincere initiative.

- e. Groups that do not recognise the legitimate political system in the Kingdom of Bahrain began to cause chaos and terrorise innocent civilians by blocking roads, assaulting passers-by, attacking students in schools and universities, setting up checkpoints and bearing weapons and using them against people and security personnel.
- f. This situation led to the declaration of a State of National Safety in order to restore order in Bahrain. In addition, the GCC-JSF was invited to protect vital locations in Bahrain and to fulfil its role according to GCC joint defence treaties. These units are not involved in any internal security operations.
- g. The statements issued by Iranian officials are a flagrant intervention in the internal affairs of Bahrain. Iran is invited to revisit its policy towards Bahrain, in particular as it relates to Iranian calls on international organisations to intervene in Bahrain.

Saturday, 19 March 2011

572. Levels of general violence decreased in Bahrain. There were fewer reports of clashes between protesters and police and fewer reported incidents of violence and vandalism compared with previous days.

573. Police continued to operate checkpoints on many roads in Bahrain, where drivers were stopped, searched and arrested if they were found to be carrying any anti-government material. The practice of seizing and examining mobile phones and arresting persons who were found to have anti-government SMS messages or videos recorded on their phones continued.

574. Patterns of mistreatment of arrested persons continued, especially at police stations. Large numbers of people were arrested for participating in demonstrations in the various cities and villages of Bahrain. Individuals continued to be blindfolded and handcuffed behind their backs upon arrest, after which they were transported to police stations where they were subjected to various forms of mistreatment, including beatings, kicking, lashing with rubber hoses and verbal insults.²⁶³

575. Riot police continued to be deployed in many neighbourhoods of Bahrain to ensure that no further demonstrations were organised. In some cases, clashes occurred between these units and persons who either tried to organise protests or tried to attack police patrols.

576. Some of the neighbourhoods in which confrontations with police took place included Al-Khamis, Issa Town, Hamad Town, Sitra, Sanabis, Jad Hafs and Karbabad.

²⁶³ See Chapter VI, Section D.

577. Searches and arrests continued to be undertaken at SMC throughout the day. At 01:00, while searching the corridors of the facility, security forces reported finding two Kalashnikov rifles and three ammunition caches. A number of persons were also arrested for disguising themselves as patients. During the day, the security services deployed at SMC moved all patients who had been involved in the protests of the previous weeks to ward on the sixth floor of SMC. Allegations later emerge that those patients were subjected to various forms of mistreatment, including beatings, kicking, slapping, and being dragged in the corridors of the sixth floor.²⁶⁴

578. That evening, while riot police were dispersing a group of demonstrators in Al-Khamis, Mr Hani Abdulaziz Abdulla Jumma was fatally injured. He was pronounced dead at 23:30. Reports indicate that he had sustained gunshot wounds and was pursued by police into an empty apartment building where he was severely beaten. He was later taken to the Bahrain International Hospital and was then transferred to BDF Hospital, where he died. His body was released to his family on 25 March.²⁶⁵

579. At 19:00, the BDF issued a detailed statement including instructions for pedestrians and drivers when approaching BDF checkpoints and roadblocks. The statement also included details of traffic diversions for drivers to avoid areas of Manama that had been cordoned off by the BDF.

580. The BDF announced the establishment of a closed maritime zone off the coast of Bahrain in which all forms of navigation and shipping were prohibited. The BDF issued a statement identifying the exact coordinates of this zone. During the following days, BDF naval patrols arrested a number of individuals who entered the zone.

Sunday, 20 March 2011

581. Bahraini security services continued their operations aimed at restoring order, reopening roads and ending all forms of demonstrations that were reported in various areas of Bahrain.

582. Throughout the day, police patrols and checkpoints stopped and searched individuals and vehicles. Many of those found to be carrying anti-government material were arrested and transferred to the nearest police station. Cars were searched for posters, leaflets, flags and other objects indicating that an individual sympathised with protesters. Personal property, such as laptop computers and mobile phones, was routinely confiscated. Earlier patterns of mistreatment at these checkpoints continued, including insulting the religious and sectarian beliefs of persons believed to be Shia.

583. Police and riot control units continued to cordon off neighbourhoods and districts in which demonstrations were reported, such as Sitra, Sanabis, Nowiderat and Karzakan. These units continued to use tear gas, sound bombs, rubber bullets and occasionally shotgun rounds to disperse crowds.

²⁶⁴ See Chapter V.

²⁶⁵ See Chapter VI, Section A.

584. A number of expatriate workers reported being harassed and, in some cases, assaulted by unidentified individuals. Ras Ruman and Al-Lozy were among the neighbourhoods in which these incidents were recorded.

585. Despite the MoI operations that were ongoing in various areas of Bahrain and the reports of attacks on individuals in a number of locations, life gradually began to return to normality in Bahrain. Many roads were cleared of roadblocks and debris, and most government ministries, offices and businesses reopened.

586. At 06:30, the body of Mr Abdulrasoul Hassan Ali Mohamed Al-Hujjairi was found in the vicinity of al-Askar Road in the Awali district. He was taken to BDF Hospital where he was pronounced dead. While the exact circumstances leading to this fatality are unclear, reports indicated that the deceased had gone missing around sunset the previous day. He suffered severe injuries all over his body and to his head caused by beatings.

587. During the day, security forces continued to search the floors and wards of SMC. Eleven megaphones and three sound systems were reported to have been found during these searches. A Kalashnikov rifle was also reported to have been found in the vicinity of the entrance to the Accident and Emergency Department.

588. The seven main opposition parties (Al Wefaq, Wa'ad, the Islamic Action Society, the National Democratic Assemblage, the Nationalist Democratic Society, Al Ikha' National Society and the Al Menbar Progressive Democratic Society) held a joint press conference in which they announced the following:

- a. They do not place any preconditions on the commencement of a national dialogue. Rather, they identify principles that should govern the dialogue.
- b. They call upon the international community to stop the human rights violations being perpetrated in Bahrain.
- c. They deny either receiving or rejecting mediation initiatives from Turkey, Qatar or any other country.
- d. Bahrain needs the army to return to its barracks and the GCC-JSF to be withdrawn. An investigation must be undertaken into what happened in Bahrain, and all detainees must be released.
- e. When the circumstances are right for a dialogue, the opposition parties will be the first to engage in a dialogue. Indeed, they were among the first to present their views on the dialogue to HRH the Crown Prince's Court. They also affirmed to representatives of HRH the Crown Prince on 15 March their readiness to engage in a dialogue. However, any dialogue will fail if it does not commence in the right circumstances and on bases that would put the country on the right track towards democratic rule.

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- f. Expatriate workers are considered guests who have always been respectful towards the people and who will always be treated with respect.

589. The GFBTU announced that it would indefinitely extend a general strike that it had called for in previous weeks. The Secretary General of the union announced, “Workers are scared to go out to work as there are checkpoints everywhere and in some cases they are questioned unnecessarily by authorities.”

Monday, 21 March 2011

590. Many aspects of life in Bahrain continued to return to normality. Many businesses were now operating, students were returning to schools and universities, and ordinary traffic flows resumed except in areas where confrontations continued between riot police and demonstrations.

591. Police at checkpoints continued to search vehicles and persons in many areas of Bahrain, and continued to arrest individuals carrying anti-government material. Public security forces also continued to arrest individuals who were participating in gatherings or protests in a number of villages, such as Sitra, Sanabis, Karbabad, Karzakan, Issa Town and Hamad Town. Many of the arrested individuals were under the age of 30, including children under the age of 18 and some under the age of 15. As in previous days, these persons were taken to and detained at nearby police stations, where they were subjected to various forms of mistreatment, including beating, slapping, kicking, lashing with rubber hoses and verbal abuse directed in particular against religious and sectarian beliefs of Shia.

592. A number of employees of security services reported being harassed, and at times assaulted, by unidentified individuals. Some MoI and BDF personnel also reported findings markings on the entrances to their residences as a threat of retribution for the ongoing operations by governmental security services.

593. The *Valieh Faghih* of Iran and the Supreme Leader of the Iranian Revolution, Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, stated that the “victory of the people of Bahrain was inevitable”, and expressed the view that the ongoing events in Bahrain were similar to developments in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. The Supreme Leader rejected accusations that Iran was “supporting the people of Bahrain because they are Shia”, and affirmed that the policy of the “Islamic Republic of Iran is predicated on defending the people and their rights against all dictatorial and egotistical rulers without distinguishing between Sunnis and Shia.” Grand Ayatollah Khamenei added, “Saudi Arabia committed a mistake by sending its forces into Bahrain because this enrages the Islamic nations.”

594. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran also summoned the *Chargé d’Affaires* at the Bahraini embassy in Tehran to request the departure of one of the embassy’s diplomatic officers in response to Bahrain’s decision to declare a member of the Iranian embassy in Manama *persona non grata*.

Tuesday, 22 March 2011

595. The MoI continued its efforts to restore order in Bahrain. Police patrols were deployed to a number of neighbourhoods to disperse protests, reopen roads and remove checkpoints. These police continued to surround and seal the entries into districts and neighbourhoods like Sitra, Sanabis, Al-Khamis, Karbabad and many parts of Hamad Town and Issa Town.

596. Police continued to operate checkpoints on many of the main roads, where cars and individuals were searched. Personal property, such as laptop computers, mobile phones and cameras, continued to be seized and searched for anti-government material. Individuals arrested at these checkpoints were transferred to the nearest police stations, where they were detained and subjected to forms of mistreatment similar to those reported in earlier days.

597. The GFBTU announced the suspension of the general strike it had called for earlier. A statement issued by the union clarified that it had made the decision on the basis of assurances from senior official sources that assaults against workers would cease, and that their harassment in the workplace would not be allowed.

598. The Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations in New York submitted a letter of protest to the United Nations Secretary General concerning Iranian intervention in the internal affairs of Bahrain. The Consul-General of Bahrain in Jeddah also submitted a similar letter to the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Wednesday, 23 March 2011

599. The overall security situation in Bahrain continued to improve as more roads were opened and public services at most government offices and private business activity returned to normal.

600. A number of isolated acts of violence were reported in some areas. Examples of these incidents included small fires lit in garbage dumpsters in an effort to block roads, Molotov cocktails thrown at some buildings and acts of vandalism against public and private property. During the day, a number of individuals reported receiving threats to their lives from unidentified persons. Many of these threats were directed at Bahraini and foreign employees of government security agencies, including the MoI and the BDF.

601. Meanwhile, police patrols continued to enforce the ban on protests in the various cities and villages of Bahrain. Riot police dispersed groups of individuals believed to be participating in protests in a number of locations, including Al-Khamis, Damistan, Sanabis, Al-Ekr Al-Sharky, Sitra and Bani Jamra. Police checkpoints also continued to search persons and vehicles for anti-government material.

602. Mr Bassem Al-Hamer was appointed Minister of Housing and Social Development, while Minister Dr Fatima Al-Baloushi was appointed acting Minister of Health.

603. The Ministry of Education announced that it established committees to investigate and hold accountable those responsible for the disruption of classes in schools during the events of the previous weeks. These committees also examined violations of the civil service regulations committed by employees of the Ministry of Education.

604. The BDF announced a further reduction of the curfew hours it had imposed in certain areas of Manama. The curfew now began at 22:00 and ended at 04:00.

605. That night, it was announced that five Lebanese resident workers had been arrested on suspicion of links with Hezbollah. Gulf Air and Bahrain Air also suspended flights to Beirut.

Thursday, 24 March 2011

606. Demonstrations were reported in a number of areas of Bahrain during the day, including Al-Mukharaqa, A'Ali, Bilad Al-Qadeem, Al-Deraz, Ras Ruman, Al-Nouiderat, Al-Sahla, Sitra, Sanabis and Al-Juffair. The size of these demonstrations ranged from tens of individuals to almost 300 individuals. These protests were generally confronted by riot police who used tear gas, sound bombs, rubber bullets and shotguns to disperse the protesters.

607. Workers at various businesses reported being subjected to harassment by anti-government colleagues who were calling for civil disobedience to protest government measures to end demonstrations in Bahrain.

608. A number of employees of government security services also reported being the target of retributive assaults by unidentified individuals.

609. Shia residents of Al-Beseeten reported that markings were put on their houses by unidentified individuals in what seemed to be threats of attacks.

610. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, gave a televised interview to the Al-Arabiya news channel in which he focused on claims of the involvement of Hezbollah in the situation in Bahrain. The Foreign Minister made the following observations:

- a. The decision to halt flights between Manama and Beirut was not aimed at the people of Lebanon, but was due to the threats directed at Bahrain from certain Lebanese elements that are calling for violence and sectarianism in Bahrain.
- b. There is no crisis between the GoBs of Bahrain and Lebanon. Rather, Bahrain presented an official memorandum to the GoB of Lebanon to call on it to bear its responsibility in light of the threats directed at Bahrain from Lebanon.
- c. The claims made by the Secretary General of Hezbollah about the role of the GCC-JSF are “full of lies”. Bahrain considers that the GoB of Lebanon, as the sovereign authority in that country, bears the responsibility for these statements.

- d. This situation will not affect the relations between the peoples of Bahrain and Lebanon. The Lebanese expatriate community in Bahrain will remain an integral part of Bahraini society.
- e. There has been a constant involvement by a “terrorist organisation” from Lebanon in the affairs of Lebanon. Bahrain has been monitoring this for many years. Indeed, contacts were ongoing, and agents were being trained by that organisation. In addition, one of the leaders of the “discord” that occurred in Bahrain stopped in Beirut on his way back from London, and “we are aware of where he went and with whom he met”. What is coming to Bahrain from Lebanon is “evil, which Bahrain can no longer tolerate”. There are individuals who come to Bahrain from Lebanon who are considered to constitute a terrorist threat against Bahrain.
- f. If the GoB of Lebanon does not address this situation, and if the threats of terror continue to emanate from Lebanon, Bahrain may be compelled to raise the matter at international organisations.
- g. The invitation issued by HRH the Crown Prince to enter into a national dialogue was sincere. Once order and security are restored to Bahrain, everything will be open for discussion and deliberation.

Friday, 25 March 2011

611. A larger number of demonstrations were recorded during the day. Starting after Friday prayers, protests were reported in Sitra, Al-Ekr Al-Sharky, Dar Kulaib, Bani Jamra, Al-Diah, Al-Nouiderat, Al-Khamis, A’Ali, Al-Nabih Saleh, Toubli, Jad Hafs, Karbabad, Damistan, Shahrakan, Sanabis and Karzakan. The sizes of these protests varied greatly, with some involving small groups of youth while others attracted over 500 individuals.

612. In most of these situations, riot police blocked entry and exit points in the relevant neighbourhoods to contain the protests within these localities. Police used tear gas, sound bombs, rubber bullets and shotgun rounds to disperse the protesters.

613. Persons arrested during these demonstrations were transferred to the nearest police station, where they were mistreated in a manner similar to that reported on previous days. Those detained were handcuffed behind their backs, blindfolded, beaten, slapped, kicked and subjected to verbal insults directed in particular at Shia religious and sectarian symbols and beliefs. Police at checkpoints intensified their searches of persons and vehicles, and continued to arrest individuals found to have anti-government material either in their cars or saved on electronic devices such as laptops, mobile phones and cameras.

614. Isolated cases of attacks against police personnel, BDF and National Guard officers were recorded. In some cases, unidentified individuals

attempted to crash into security checkpoints and roadblocks. In a number of other incidents, individual officers were attacked in acts of retribution for the measures taken by the GoB to end protests on previous days.

615. There were also some reports of attacks against foreign workers in Bahrain.

616. The Ministry of Education announced the suspension of the government-funded scholarships of 40 students. The number of revoked scholarships later increased to 97 students.

Saturday, 26 March 2011

617. There were fewer protests recorded on 26 March than on the previous day. Demonstrations were recorded in A'Ali, Al-Deraz, Al-Mekasha', Karzakan, Bani Jamra and Sitra. The sizes of these protests, most of which did not exceed 200 individuals, were also considerably smaller than those of the previous day. Again, riot police confronted these protests, blocked exit routes from these neighbourhoods and used tear gas, sound bombs, rubber bullets and shotgun rounds to disperse the crowds.

618. In many cases, demonstrators set up roadblocks and barricades behind which they hid and threw stones, rocks and other objects at the police patrols and riot police units deployed in the area. Protesters also overturned garbage dumpsters and burned rubber tyres to deny police patrols entry into these neighbourhoods.

619. Earlier in the day, reports indicated that the Al-Sagha Mosque in Al-Muharraq was attacked with Molotov cocktails, which caused slight damage. A number of acts of vandalism were also recorded, including in Souk Al-Thahab.

620. A complaint was filed that the names and addresses of temporary and volunteer teachers who had been employed by the Ministry of Education during the previous weeks had been posted on the internet. It was feared that this would lead to retribution against those individuals by teachers who had been replaced.

621. As in previous days, individuals and vehicles were stopped and searched at police checkpoints. Persons continued to be detained if they were found to possess anti-government posters, leaflets, flags or any similar material. Police personnel also seized and examined personal electronic devices, and arrested persons who were found to have anti-government messages or images on those devices. Police patrols continued to arrest individuals who honked their car horns in a way that mimicked the chant, "Down ... down Hamad."

622. Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa met with Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi diplomats and members of those communities in Bahrain. During the meeting it was announced that a plan had been prepared to provide shelter and protection for those expatriates that had been forced to leave their homes, many of whom had sought refuge in the Pakistani School in Issa Town and the Pakistani Club in Manama. The

Foreign Minister also affirmed that the families of foreign workers killed during the previous weeks would be supported by the GoB of Bahrain, and asserted that a zero-tolerance policy would be implemented against those attacking expatriate workers.

Sunday, 27 March 2011

623. A similar pattern of protests was recorded during the day. Groups of protesters gathered in a number of neighbourhoods and clashed with riot police who were dispatched to disperse these groups. The sizes of these demonstrations varied, but generally did not exceed 200 persons.

624. Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa ordered that government ministries and departments strictly apply the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) regulation, particularly in relation to absenteeism, tardiness and overall performance. All government departments were also required to submit reports about their employees' compliance with the CSB regulations.

625. The University of Bahrain established three investigative committees into the events that occurred on campus during the past weeks leading to the suspension of classes and the closure of the university.

Monday, 28 March 2011

626. Limited protests were reported during the day. Small groups of individuals were reported to have gathered in places including Arad, Samaheej, Karzakan, Al-Diah, Al-Ekr Al-Gharby, Al Dair and Bani Jamra. In some of these areas, protesters set fire to tyres and garbage dumpsters and attempted to obstruct traffic. Police patrols clashed with these protesters and blocked off exit routes from these areas.

627. On a number of occasions, unidentified individuals attempted to attack police patrols or security checkpoints, including by throwing rocks or Molotov cocktails. Meanwhile, police continued to arrest pedestrians and drivers who were found carrying anti-government material. As on previous days, detained individuals were transferred to the closest police stations, where they were subjected to the same forms of mistreatment.

628. Assaults against security personnel also continued to be reported. For example, at 19:30, a National Guard officer reported being attacked while driving his private car in Arad. He suffered slight injuries to his head, back and chest.

629. Acting Minister of Health Dr Fatima Al-Baloushi ordered the establishment of a committee to investigate violations of applicable codes of ethics by employees of SMC.

Tuesday, 29 March 2011

630. Limited demonstrations were reported during the day. Small gatherings were recorded in Al-Ekr Al-Sharky, Babar, Al-Berhama, Al-Maa'ameer, Sitra, Karzakan and Al-Noueidrat.

631. The Chamber of Deputies accepted the resignations submitted by 11 Al Wefaq Members of Parliament. The Chamber postponed consideration of the seven remaining resignations.

Wednesday, 30 March 2011

632. A higher number of demonstrations were reported during the day, many of which were attended by around 100 protesters. Among the neighbourhoods where demonstrations took place were Sanabis, Saar, Al-Nouidrat, Al-Ma'ameer, Jad Hafs, Bilad Al-Qadeem, Sitra, Al-Deraz, Al Dair, Bani Jamra, Al-Zeng, Karana and Bourri.

633. The MoI deployed riot police to confront and disperse these demonstrations. As in earlier days, tear gas, sound bombs, rubber bullets and shotgun rounds were used to disperse the crowds. Security forces and protesters also blocked the entries and exits of these neighbourhoods.

634. At 18:30, a 15-year-old boy, Mr Sayed Ahmed Saeed Shams, was pronounced dead at the American Mission Hospital. Reports indicate that he was fatally injured when struck in the head by a tear gas canister shot at close range by a riot control unit deployed in Saar. According to eyewitness testimony, he fell to the ground upon being struck by the canister, after which police continued to beat and kick him.

Thursday, 31 March 2011

635. An attack using Molotov cocktails against the Sayeda Zeinab Mosque in Hamad Town was reported.

636. Fewer demonstrations were reported than on previous days. Groups of demonstrators ranging in size between 10 and 40 persons gathered in various locations in Manama and neighbouring villages, and confrontations occurred between riot police and demonstrators. Many demonstrators placed barricades in the middle of roads to stop police from advancing towards them.

637. Individuals were also reported to have gathered in a number of Ma'tams to commemorate the passage of 40 days since the death of some of the victims who had died since the beginning of the events of February/March.

638. Police continued to remove roadblocks erected by protesters in various neighbourhoods and villages throughout Bahrain. Police checkpoints also continued to search and seize individuals found to possess anti-government posters, leaflets or other similar material. Those individuals arrested by police, either on the streets while participating in protests or at checkpoints, were all handcuffed behind their backs, blindfolded and then transferred to police stations, where they were beaten, slapped, kicked and verbally insulted and abused.

639. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, met with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to reassure her that the GoB of Bahrain would ensure the safety and security of the expatriate Bangladeshi community.

C. Concluding Observations

640. Chapter II, in presenting a brief historical review of Bahrain, identified some of the sources of popular discontent over the years. Many of the demands for political and socio-economic reforms voiced in February and March 2011 were not new.

641. In the present globalised context, events in different parts of the world sometimes impact each other. Thus, understanding one event may require a broader view of the larger context. Some regions of the world, however, have more significant strategic and economic weight than others. Thus, what occurs within them has a greater impact on certain parts of the world and even on the world as a whole. Bahrain is in an important strategic region. As an Arab and Muslim country, Bahrain is necessarily a part of developments in these two groups of countries and maybe more so with respect to the Arab world to which it is more closely connected. Thus, what is generally called the Arab spring also had its impact in Bahrain. Though each Arab country has reacted differently, the Arab spring has stimulated pent up popular reactions and grievances in many Arab States, including Bahrain. Unlike earlier manifestations of unrest, the initial protests that began on 14 February were not orchestrated by institutionalised political opposition groups, but were triggered and led by networks of discontented and politically unaffiliated youth. Like their counterparts in other Arab countries, they used modern technology, including social media networks to call for demonstrations and publicise their demands. Furthermore, the demands raised during the protests that began on 14 February enjoyed, at least initially, a large degree of popular support that crossed religious, sectarian and ethnic lines.

642. The roots of what started on 14 February go back to the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. During each of these decades, even before the appearance of social media, people demonstrated for what they believed to be their political, economic and social rights. During the beginning of the events in Bahrain, as during the past decades, the demand was for reforms, not for regime change. This was the same in the early stages of the demonstrations and protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Yemen. But as experience shows, when demands for reforms are rebuffed, the demands become for regime change. In the end, the society becomes both polarised and radicalised. This situation leaves little room for a centre that could bring together people from all ethnic and sectarian groups and from all social and economic strata to work for reforms based on well established principals and processes of democracy, good governance and respect for internationally protected human rights.

1. The progression of the protest movement

643. It is not the task of the Commission to determine which side is responsible for which outcomes, but it is necessary in order to understand the evolution of events to look at the facts and their underlying causes. In this respect, there is no doubt that what occurred in February and March and subsequent related events was the result of an escalating process and that both

the GoB and the opposition have their share of responsibility in letting events unfold as they have.

644. Reviewing the progression of the protest movement in Bahrain from its inception on 14 February 2011 provides a number of insights. The demands expressed during the earlier demonstrations related mainly to political and constitutional reform, which was to pave the way for greater popular participation in governance, equal access to socio-economic opportunities and development, action against corruption, and termination of the alleged practice of political naturalisation. These demands were supported across the board, and did not reflect sectarian or ethnic characteristics. Few of the protestors who took to the streets on 14 February called for changing the ruling regime in Bahrain, or directed criticism at HM King Hamad or the ruling family.

645. The size and breadth of these initial demonstrations was relatively limited. However, the death of two protestors on 14 and 15 February caused the number of persons participating in protests throughout Bahrain to increase significantly. In addition, a discernible shift in the nature of demands being called for in these protests took place after the first clearance of the GCC Roundabout on 17 February 2011 and the deaths that occurred in confrontations between protestors and security forces. Popular discontent was further heightened by what many considered to be the lack of both adequate and timely government responses to the protestors' demands and measures to address grievances. For example, the limited cabinet reshuffle of 25 February was viewed by many demonstrators as inadequate. This led demonstrators to escalate their demands and call for the resignation of the Prime Minister and the entire Cabinet.

646. As the protests continued, more criticism and allegations of corruption were directed at HRH the Prime Minister. Later, many demonstrators began to call for changing the ruling regime in Bahrain, and gradually, the chant "the people demand the removal of the regime", which was borrowed from other Arab countries that had witnessed similar mass uprisings, became one of the protestors' slogans.

647. The meaning of the call to remove the regime that was chanted by many Bahrainis was, at least initially, not identical to that chanted in other Arab countries. For most political opposition groups, including Al Wefaq, removal of the regime did not mean establishing a republic in Bahrain and removing the ruling Al Khalifa family from power, but rather securing the resignation of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet to be followed by constitutional reform that would allow for an elected Prime Minister, responsible government and a fully empowered and democratically elected legislature.

648. Another notable feature of the demonstrations that occurred after the reopening of the GCC Roundabout, on 19 February, was the extension of protests to other important locations in Manama. This started with the organisation of mass rallies in the main thoroughfares leading to the GCC Roundabout, such as the Martyr's March of 22 February. Demonstrations also

started taking place at other locations such as the premises of the Council of Ministers, the Ministries of Interior, Information and Education, and later the Bahrain Financial Harbour.

649. The participation of students, at secondary, high school and university levels, in the demonstrations was significant for a number of reasons. First, it meant that the number of protestors increased dramatically as thousands of students participated in marches that usually began at their schools in the early hours of the morning. Secondly, the geographical extent of demonstrations in Bahrain expanded considerably due to the fact that students from schools in different areas were participating. Thirdly, the inclusion of students in the protest movement raised concerns among parents and families for their safety because it threatened to cause confrontations between students who either held different political views or hailed from different backgrounds. The clashes that occurred at the University of Bahrain on 10 and 13 March further contributed to the heightened sense of insecurity in Bahrain.

650. Despite escalating their demands and expanding the locations of their demonstrations, the protestors remained peaceful. In addition, as mentioned above, since the reopening of the GCC Roundabout on 19 February, police personnel were exercising considerable self-restraint. No confrontations with protestors, including those demonstrating at government facilities, were reported, and no restrictions were placed on access to the GCC Roundabout. Even though the protestors had not obtained authorisation to hold protests, their peaceful demonstrations were tolerated by the GoB.

651. Starting in early March, however, a series of events changed the nature of the protest movement and contributed to the decision of the GoB to take forceful measures to end demonstrations. The first of these was the clashes that occurred in Hamad Town on 3 March. This marked the first major confrontation between Shia and Sunnis. Sectarian tensions increased when, on 7 March, threats were circulated on internet social media networks, such as Twitter and Facebook, against a Sunni woman who injured a demonstrator at the Bahrain Financial Harbor as she left the area after her car was stopped by demonstrators and she was harassed. In response to the threats of retaliation made against her, large groups of Sunni men gathered at her residence to protect her. These and other incidents led to a sense that the GoB was no longer capable of providing protection, and that Bahrainis would have to fend for themselves by creating popular committees and neighbourhood checkpoints. This sense of insecurity was heightened as groups of armed vandals attacked foreign workers, threatened private homes and destroyed private property in various neighbourhoods. The protests seemed to enter a different phase.

652. Also on 7 March, three opposition groups proclaimed the Coalition for the Republic, which called for the establishment of a democratic republic in Bahrain. This further heightened fears among some in the Sunni community that the protest movement was adopting maximalist and radical positions. Clashes such as those that occurred on 10 March at the Saar High School for Girls and the violence that took place at the University of Bahrain

on 13 March contributed to the growing impression, particularly among Sunnis, that the protest movement was no longer peaceful. Some opposition groups have claimed in discussions with the Commission that these events, especially the clashes that occurred at the university, were orchestrated, or at least condoned, by the GoB. The Commission has not been able to verify these claims, but the heightened sense of fear and the sense of breakdown of law and order that developed among some Bahrainis and many Sunnis due to these events was patent.

653. The situation was further exacerbated by the march organised on 11 March 2011 to Al-Riffa, where the Royal Court is situated. Despite the fact that the major opposition parties, including Al Wefaq, did not condone this march and organised a parallel rally in the vicinity of the GCC Roundabout, the march on Al-Riffa led many in the GoB and among the Sunni community to conclude that because of the radical demands of the protestors the room for compromise had been diminished.

654. The final turning point took place when, starting in the early morning of 13 March 2011, demonstrators at the Bahrain Financial Harbour obstructed traffic along the King Faisal Highway. This escalation by protestors, which essentially partitioned Manama, coincided with the failure of talks between HRH the Crown Prince and opposition parties. These developments and the gravely deteriorated state of law and order in Bahrain led the GoB to take forceful measures to end demonstrations and restore order, beginning with the arrival of the GCC-JSF on 14 March, the declaration of a State of National Safety on 15 March, and the second clearance of the GCC Roundabout on 16 March.

2. Government Policy during the events of February and March 2011

655. The response by the GoB between 14 February and 31 March 2011 to the unfolding situation may be divided to three stages. The first stage began on 14 February and ended on 19 February with the reopening of the GCC Roundabout to protestors. The second stage extended from 19 February till 14 March when the GCC-JSF arrived in Bahrain. The third and final stage was during the period 14-31 March 2011.

656. The first stage began with the outbreak of demonstrations on the morning of 14 February and ended with the reopening of the GCC Roundabout on 19 February on the initiative of HRH the Crown Prince. Starting on 14 February, the GoB resorted to a heavy deployment of its Public Security Forces to disperse protestors. The practice of these security forces units seemed to have been to surround towns and villages in which demonstrations occurred and to block the exits from these locations so as to contain demonstrations within those areas.

657. Inevitably, there were clashes between protestors and police when the latter began to disperse the protestors. These clashes usually ended when police used riot control techniques, such as firing tear gas, sound bombs,

rubber bullets, and at times, shotgun rounds. In most cases, protestors dispersed into the smaller streets and alleyways of their neighbourhoods. The protestors were sometimes pursued by police personnel, either in patrol cars or on foot. On some occasions, protestors threw stones, metal rods, Molotov cocktails and other objects at the police. They also made roadblocks with rocks, trees and garbage dumpsters that were occasionally overturned and set afire.

658. The forceful confrontation and dispersion of protestors led to the first two fatalities on 14 and 15 February. These two deaths caused a significant increase in the number of persons participating in protests. Many were angered at the use of force against protestors, and, therefore, participated in the funerals of these victims, which then were transformed into marches and rallies raising political demands. By 15 February, the GCC Roundabout had become the epicentre of demonstrations and the primary destination for marches coming from other parts of Manama and neighbouring villages.

659. To restore order, the GoB decided to clear the GCC Roundabout of all protestors on 17 February. During that operation four individuals were fatally wounded by the police, which brought the total number of deaths to six. The GoB then deployed BDF units to secure the GCC Roundabout and to deny demonstrators access to it. The next day, as groups of protestors attempted to re-enter the GCC Roundabout, another person was fatally wounded in the vicinity of a BDF roadblock. The deaths caused by the police and the implication of the military in the shooting of a civilian exacerbated public anger towards the GoB.

660. The available evidence and the progression of events during these days do not indicate that orders were issued to the police to use lethal force against demonstrators. However, as discussed in Chapter VI, Section B, the Commission has found that police units used force against civilians in a manner that was both unnecessary and disproportionate. This was due, at least partially, to inadequate training of field units, ineffectual command and control systems and, at times, insufficient numbers of police to handle demonstrators.

661. Police confrontations with the demonstrators and the apparent unwillingness of the GoB to address popular demands, added to the anger on the streets and resulted in more violent confrontations between demonstrators and security forces.

662. At this stage, with the approval of HM the King, HRH the Crown Prince took the initiative to engage with the leaders of the demonstrators and the opposition in search of a negotiated resolution of concerns about constitutional and socio-economic reforms. In the following days, HRH the Crown Prince was instrumental in securing the withdrawal of the BDF from the streets of Manama, reopening the GCC Roundabout to demonstrators and launching discussions with the opposition on resolving the unfolding crisis.

663. This marked the beginning of the second stage in the evolution of the policy of the GoB in dealing with the developments in Bahrain. During this

stage, the GoB took a number of measures designed to placate public anger and engaged, through HRH the Crown Prince, in negotiations with groups from across the political spectrum in an attempt to reach a solution to the ongoing crisis. Among the measures undertaken by the GoB was granting protestors unfettered access to the GCC Roundabout, dismissing four Cabinet Ministers, pardoning large numbers of individuals convicted in political cases and allowing exiled political leaders to return to Bahrain. The GoB also allowed demonstrations and marches to be held throughout Bahrain and ensured that the Public Security Forces exercised considerable self-restraint and did not disperse these protests. No fatalities were recorded during the period from 18 February to 15 March 2011.

664. While efforts to find a negotiated solution to the ongoing crisis in Bahrain were underway, other aspects of government policy seem to have exacerbated public discontent. For example, government media outlets, especially Bahrain Television, provoked criticism for what many considered to be biased coverage of the unfolding events promoting sectarianism.

665. As the weeks passed, there were a number of important developments. The most significant were the sectarian clashes, the disruption of classes in many schools as students participated in political marches, the violent clashes at the University of Bahrain, the attacks against expatriates, the blocking of major thoroughfares in Manama, the creation of “popular committees” and the setting up of checkpoints in many neighbourhoods to defend against vandals.

666. By 12-13 March, the general state of law and order in Bahrain had significantly deteriorated. This, coupled with the failure of political negotiations between HRH the Crown Prince and the opposition, led the GoB to take steps to restore order and maintain security. The GoB requested assistance from GCC-JSF which arrived on 14 March followed by the issuance of Royal Decree No. 18 of 2011 pursuant to which a State of National Safety was declared in Bahrain. The GCC-JSF did not participate in any riot control operations and did not engage with any civilians.

667. In the following weeks, the GoB forcefully confronted all forms of demonstrations in Bahrain. Public Security Forces were dispatched to the various villages and neighbourhoods to disperse demonstrations. The BDF was deployed to the centre of Manama, where the GCC Roundabout was cordoned-off and later removed. The GoB also arrested many of the political leaders of the protest movement and set up checkpoints throughout Bahrain where people found to have either participated in demonstrations or sympathised with the demonstrators were arrested. Many of those arrested were subjected to mistreatment at police stations. This situation continued until 31 March 2011.

3. Political negotiations between HRH the Crown Prince and political parties

668. The Commission, for the purposes of clarity, finds it useful to summarise the positions adopted by the relevant parties in the initiative undertaken by HRH the Crown Prince and present a brief overview of the reasons for the failure of the negotiations.

669. The proposals advanced by HRH the Crown Prince and his negotiating team were based on discussions held with a wide array of political parties, business leaders, and societal figures. The results of these consultations, which extended from 16 February until 12 March 2011, and was accepted by the Gathering of National Unity, appeared in a statement that was released to the public by HRH the Crown Prince on 13 March 2011. It identified the principles on which the proposed national dialogue would proceed, namely:

- a. A parliament with full authority;
- b. A government that represents the will of the people;
- c. Naturalisation;
- d. Fair voting districts;
- e. Combating corruption;
- f. State property; and
- g. Addressing sectarian tension.

670. As an indication of the seriousness of these proposals, HRH the Crown Prince proposed a mechanism that would ensure that the results of the proposed national dialogue were implemented. This mechanism, which was recorded in a Memorandum of Understanding dated 12 March, envisioned that the national dialogue should aim to amend the Constitution and that its results would be submitted to a popular referendum for approval.

671. The positions adopted by the opposition, however, varied as the protests movement progressed. During early discussions between advisers of HRH the Crown Prince and opposition representatives, particularly Al Wefaq, the latter presented demands that included amending the Constitution to grant the Chamber of Deputies greater powers and to make the GoB answerable to parliament. However, as the situation in Bahrain evolved and as the protest movement gained momentum, the opposition revisited its positions and articulated additional demands. Specifically, the opposition's primary demand was the election of a Constituent Assembly to rewrite the Constitution of Bahrain. In addition, the opposition placed preconditions to entering into a national dialogue, which included the resignation of HRH the Prime Minister and the entire government. By 13 March, however, the opposition, particularly Al Wefaq, further amended its position by seemingly dismissing the option of entering into a national dialogue in favour of electing a Constituent Assembly in which all constitutional and political matters could

be discussed. This proposal was not accepted by the GoB, and ultimately, the negotiations ended.

672. If HRH the Crown Prince's initiative to hold a national dialogue at the time had been accepted, it could have paved the way for significant constitutional and political reform in Bahrain.

673. The reluctance of the opposition to accept the initiative of HRH the Crown Prince seems to have been due to a number of factors. Primarily, it seems that some in the opposition parties, particularly Al Wefaq, were unwilling to accept proposals presented by HRH the Crown Prince in light of what seems to have been a belief in their ability to achieve greater political gains given the momentum and strength of the protest movement. Second, it has been indicated to the Commission by some members of opposition parties, particularly Al Wefaq, that they doubted the willingness of some within the political establishment to accept any substantial alteration of the governance system in Bahrain. Third, the reluctance of the opposition to conclude an agreement with HRH the Crown Prince and to enter a national dialogue before certain preconditions were met, such as dismissing the government, and without previously agreed principles, parameters, and implementation mechanisms is also imputable to the general mistrust that the opposition harboured towards the GoB. The most salient reason for this lack of trust is what has been described to the Commission as a sense of betrayal that was felt towards the GoB in the months and years following the adoption of the National Action Charter in 2001. Repeatedly, opposition figures have voiced to the Commission their belief that the reform pledges made in the National Action Charter were yet to be fulfilled in significant part. This "trust deficit" based on previously unfulfilled government promises was an important factor in the opposition's lack enthusiasm for engaging in the dialogue and the insistence on electing a Constituent Assembly that would rewrite the whole constitution and examine all other political issues.