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The Hidden Conflict the Future of the Mandate of the Covenant in Bahrain

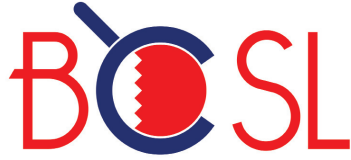
22 Jan 2013



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Index

Introduction	4
1- Preliminary data	5
2- Repositioning Salman during the Pearl Roundabout protests	6
3- Repositioning Salman during the Pearl Roundabout protests	7
4- The military promotions ignores the Crown Prince	7
5- The Crown Prince: Implications of tumbling of the economic reform programs	8
6- The Scenarios of the mandate of the Covenant	9
Scenario I: Nasser, a Crown Prince	9
Scenario II: a double-headed Kingdom	10
Conclusion	12



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Introduction

It may seem that Bahrain does not live a problematic mandate of the Covenant, as experienced in Saudi Arabia and Oman, but this is only what is shown on the surface. As the Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa (1969 - present), the eldest son of the king, suffers of great difficulties in persuading his ruling family and the people of Bahrain (pro and opposition), including Saudi Arabia and some Western parties that he is a promising option. Where the name of his younger brother Nasser (1987 - present) rise and shine as an alternative to hard-liners in the ruling family and its elder sister Al Saud for Nasser taking on this post. However, the latter – Nasser- may face the opposition's rejection to him, and western scepticism in his ability to create national harmony, as well as a massive attack from prestigious international human rights organizations who shall necessarily cast away the western position, and may also undermine the credibility of the prince-to-be.

1- Preliminary data

On the 26th of last November, Al Ayam newspaper, owned by the media advisor to the king of Bahrain Nabil Al Hamar, published on its front page news of King Abdullah II of Jordan welcoming Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad, along with a photo showing him attentively listening to Nasser.

In the same issue, the newspaper devoted a full page to cover the visit of the fourth son of King Hamad –Nasser- to the Hashemite Kingdom and his declaration of Syrian refugee camps in Amman for humanitarian projects supportive to the Syrians.

The Royal Charity Organization⁽¹⁾ is headed by Nasser, which was restructured in 2007 based on the aspiration of the young prince to play a public role, about a year after graduating from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) in England.

The Royal Charity Organization almost gulp down the Bahrain Red Crescent Foundation and other charities of national character, in a non-innocent attempt to monopolize charitable work, and highlighting it as a registered brand in the name of the Prince favored by his father the king.

In a time when economic reform projects of the Crown Prince face fundamental problems almost ousted them, the charitable projects of Sheikh Nasser are not publicly criticized, even by the opposition. whereas intensive and costly public relations campaigns continue to show him as a man with humanitarian face, giving plenty of his time and effort for the poor and orphans and widows inside and outside Bahrain. I cannot consider that as a spontaneous and unintentional matter that does not carry special significance.

Nasser also chaired Bahrain Royal Equestrian and Endurance Federation, within a huge and undeclared budget, an issue that was and still raising a wide controversy and a popular curse, as well as questions about the waste of public money from the

point of view of loyalists and opponents.

And usually the name of Nasser is announced as a first place winner in the races he participated in since the Federation was established in 2002, as if he is a “Super Hero”.

On the other hand, his older brother, the Crown Prince Salman turned to car races, which are fashionable Western trend. He established the Bahrain International Circuit at cost of \$ 150 million, and since its establishment in 2004 it is recording substantial and consecutive losses (more than 8 million BHD in 2011).

It is interesting that the king during his mandate of covenant, was head of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports until his assumption of the position of the emirate in March 1999. Then Sheikh Salman got in charge of the presidency of the Council to coincide with his appointment as crown prince in 1999, except for that Salman lost this post in favor to his younger brother Nasser in 2010, and perhaps he – the Crown Prince- should fear losing other posts indeed.

The regime has invested a lot of money and effort in Nasser in presenting him as a sponsor of sports and youth, and highlighting the events sponsored by or those that hold his name as extraordinary events. For example, Nasser 5 event adopted awards that cost 60 thousand BHD, and received media coverage on a large scale⁽²⁾.

In short, Nasser is being marketed through intensive local media propaganda as a young, inspiring man, athlete, and poet, owner of an opinion and view, and sponsor of youth. He is also being presented as a person who is keen on youth culture, education, residence and livelihood. Moreover, Nasser is promoted as a merciful and generous young man who hardly sleeps the nights worrying on the poor, widows and orphans. And above all, a military person who earned the confidence of his father and always prepared to fight, ready to strike with an iron fist

against his father's opponents. All are attributes of an inspiring leader, who audiences seek his leadership, and looks forward to him as a redeemer!!

2- Repositioning Salman during the Pearl Roundabout protests

During mass pro-democracy protests and set-ins in the Pearl Roundabout (February-March 2011), the Crown Prince has been marketed and promoted across the local and international media for about an entire month, and in a defining and historic moment that shall remain in the minds for some time, as the owner of a moderate position. He was presented as the man of dialogue, and a dove of peace who deals with the opposition by calling for serenity and dialogue, and presenting a bold political initiative⁽³⁾, which earned him the support of the West, a curse of the loyalists, and sympathy of the opponents who could not find an alternative to ally with inside the ruling family - which adopted "We or they" motto-except for the Crown Prince.

From the point of view of the Crown Prince's opponents in the ruling family (Al Khawaled Pavilion), chaired by the Minister of Royal Court, Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Salman failure in attracting opponents to his initiative was a miserable failure.

It might not be exaggerated if I say that the success of Salman in attracting opponents would have recorded - from the standpoint of Al Khawaled- a greater failure. As long as they, along with Sunni public opinion generally considered the mere thought of the Crown Prince, or his acceptance to play the role of the negotiator on the establishment of a full power parliament and a government that represents the people's will, as a wrong and destructive strategy.

A strategy that calls on a military intervention of Saudi Arabia in order to resolve the conflict in favor of the current situation, and bury the dream that might have been drawn by the initiative consisting of seven points, allowing the opposition to have a prestigious weight in the power and influence circle.

That initiative has dragged more challenges to the Crown Prince and has exacerbated the fragility of his position in front of influential people in the palace that see him as a unreliable person who does not succeed in the tasks assigned to him. They always repeat that the Crown Prince is a meek and liberal person. Add to that, his western interests: his passion to riding cars and not horses, and does not write Bedouin poetry, as does his brother Nasser!

In addition to the opposition, Salman carried alone the responsibility of the collapse of the talks in March, as if the other parties in power are not involved. The Crown Prince was isolated after the authorities used excessive force to crush the protests in the Pearl Roundabout. It was repeated for so long that he was not a man of political or military decision. He worked hard to satisfy the militants and Sunni loyalists by sacking thousands of workers in companies run by "Mumtalakat" (the investment arm of the Bahraini Government), under his supervision.

According to this text he was seen as a wobbling person whose way is unclear, once calling for dialogue and another lining up with the owners of the security solution. He was also seen as a person who does not complete his effort in dialogue on one hand, and not putting all his cards in the hands of the military on the other hand. "We do not know his land from his sky, nor to what direction is he leaning" a comment by a senior loyalist once, describing Salman. The opposition says no better talk about Salman and his potential, as well as the skyline of attempts of dialogue in which he contributed.

No longer has the Economic Development Board EDB chaired by Crown Prince met every Thursday as it used to do since the public clash with the Prime Minister in 2008. Where its major adviser Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa was transferred from his post as Chief Executive of the EDB to be Senior Advisor in the Crown Prince Royal Court, as one of the signs of reclusion, and disastrous failure of the EDB, which has become hanger to all state's economic failures.

However, attempts to re-market the Crown Prince continued through opening his weekly gatherings to welcome his supporters. Neither his father the king or the Prime Minister and those influential officials have not visited his gatherings, where also no visits of the opposition were recorded⁽⁴⁾. It is indeed a complex situation for the Crown Prince, where he carries full responsibility first and foremost. It is probably acceptable by him or even admired, mistakenly believing that he is engaged with all parties, but he is mostly losing them.

3- Repositioning Salman during the Pearl Roundabout protests

In March 2011, Nasser led the militants in the ruling family, supporting the position taken by his father, and the army commander Khalifa bin Ahmed, and Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman. He also spoke publicly via Bahrain National TV in a violent and reckless manner that lacked diplomacy, calling for revenge against the opposition⁽⁵⁾. That seemed a defining moment in the official approach of the state expressed by Nasser more than Salman who went on state television several times calling for calmness, while the army killed Abdulredha Buhumaid (18 February 2011). Whereas, his younger brother Nasser was biased to take on the security option, a decision that the authorities adopted relentlessly.

Nasser (and his brother Khalid) is accused of torturing prisoners of conscience⁽⁶⁾, and that have ruined his image inside the country and in the West. That is one of the most important weaknesses that are not to be easily forgotten or ignored as a key of a character meant to be leading. Whilst Saudi Arabia and the influential pavilion in the royal family and its loyalists are now convinced that the option of Nasser is worth studying for taking on key positions in the regime.

4- The military promotions ignores the Crown Prince

The King appointed his son Nasser as chief of the Royal Guard in June 2011, shortly after the lifting of

the state of emergency in the country, which was announced between 15 March and 31 May 2011. That has shown the king's great confidence in Nasser, who considers him as a fortified shield to protect the personal security of King (the symbol of the Khalifi influence), and prevent the opposition from carrying out their ends in the overthrow of the ruler, or reduce his powers. Promoting Nasser to the position of a colonel and assigning him to head the Royal Guard came within a systematic policy to promote the parties considered by the regime as advocate for it. Moreover, sometimes these promotions came as a proactive step, as in the case of the army commander who was promoted from the position of a General to a marshal in 8 February 2011 in the 43rd Defense Force Day and under the youth preparations declared for the launch of an uprising on February 14, a spring that followed Egypt and Tunisia springs. That has given a green light for the army to appalling violations of human rights, which some have been documented in the famous report of Bassiouni.

It seems remarkable that the promotion of the Crown Prince from a General to a marshal was announced a few days after promoting the Army Commander. As if it came after the son's reproach to his father, who forgot or ignored to promote his eldest son, which in both cases contains bright political implications.

King Hamad has issued a royal order of promoting Khalifa bin Ahmed (1946- present) to a marshal in 8 February 2011, and it was broadcasted in Bahrain TV and Bahrain News Agency BNA⁽⁷⁾. Local newspapers also published the news of the promotion in their websites on the same day⁽⁸⁾ and in their printed issues next day⁽⁹⁾, coupled with heavy banners of congratulations for two days at a row, 9th and 10th of February⁽¹⁰⁾. Reference to the Crown Prince's promotion was not made until February 15, nearly a week after the promotion of the Army Commander⁽¹¹⁾.

It is noted that the Crown Prince's promotion did not resonate in the local media, which did not publish any congratulating banners, not even regular

reports about it, for reasons related to the fake promotion itself with no single doubt, and its embarrassing timing coming after the promotion of the Army Commander. Moreover, perhaps because the country was then mired in blood due to the killing of two young men (Ali Mushaima in February 14, and Fadhel Matrook in 15 February), and then the bloody attack on the Pearl Roundabout in 17 February.

While the Minister of the Royal Court congratulated his brother the Army Commander⁽¹²⁾, he did not congratulate the Crown Prince, as there was no welcome from the Army Commander to the Crown prince's promotion, when he scored a warm welcome to Sheikh Nasser's⁽¹³⁾ promotion to the position of colonel. It is difficult not to say that this has many political interpretations. Therefore, despite the fact that the Crown Prince served as Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, he does not have influence on the military decision, which is held strongly by the Army Commander, the brother of the Minister of the Royal Court who is the right hand of the king and the real Prime Minister. Given that Sheikh Khalifa, the Prime Minister is no longer in power after the king stripped him of his powers, unlike what the international media repeats⁽¹⁴⁾.

5- The Crown Prince: Implications of tumbling of the economic reform programs

The economic reform projects led by the Crown Prince reached to almost a dead end including projects that were launched in 2003 related to reforming the economy, the labor market and education. The reasons of its retreat is back to attempts to separate political reform from economic reform, and seek to perpetuate a monopolistic model with new faces and modern mechanisms, while old monopoly lobbies stand as steel barrier to prevent the realization of the public interest, and reduce their privileges.

The labor market reform has completely derailed when it was sure that is it moving toward the interest of unemployed Shiite citizens, and small and me-

dium enterprises in which they invest in, where the restrictions on them is at its peak for the establishment of major companies. Furthermore, education reform will open competition in investment in education -which is intended to be monopolistic- and will also increase the options for Shiite citizens seeking a good education that takes them out from the reality of being seen as second-class citizens, who also cannot find the chance they deserve in scholarships provided by the Ministry of Education and military institutions.

No economic reform was made and a handful of influential people remained in control of the economy and monopolized the wealth, while talking about "competitiveness" has been focused on the competitiveness of Bahrain and its sisters in the Gulf, and neglecting local investors who find it difficult to compete against the Khalifi merchant and its platforms.

Perhaps it is not observed by ordinary citizen necessarily, but the files failing on levels of reforming Gulf Air and others caused great embarrassment to the Crown Prince. These reform programs resulted in daily losses of the company estimated at half a million BHD⁽¹⁵⁾. In addition to "Alba" for the production of aluminum (major Bahraini company) profit that fell back during the first half of 2012 to about 57 million BHD, compared to a net profit of 102.88 million BHD for the same period in 2011, a drop of 44.63 percent"⁽¹⁶⁾.

In addition to the question of public opinion in the feasibility of the Crown Prince's projects, the putative reform programs have taken the Crown Prince to face a fierce war against the Prime Minister, reached its peak in January 2008. This war has cost the Crown Prince a lot, in terms of making fierce enemies: a traders lobby, and Sunni Islamists, who are objective allies for the Prime Minister against reforming the economy, believing this supposed reform would increase the burden of businessmen, and is in favor of Shiite citizens, whether traders who may gain more competitive opportunities, or Shiite workers who represent the majority in the private sector.

It seems remarkable that the project of opening a telecommunications market, which scored some success, was not connected to the Crown Prince! Though it has been launched with his own initiative in 2003, yet, it has been meant to be linked to Ahmed Atiyatallah, a hardliner and notorious advisor in the Royal Court. Where the file of ramshackle houses been referred from the Royal Charity Organization to other government agencies -as a matter of urgency- when it became clear that the project is limping, so that its failure is not linked to Sheikh Nasser, who is intended to be a file with no single errors. Labeling errors to the Crown Prince seemed at several times as a policy led by the influential persons in the palace.

It was intended to drag the Crown Prince -who usually accepts the role sketched for him and may also volunteer for it- in the midst of a battle of attrition against the Prime Minister, in an all-out war waged by the King against his uncle to monopolize the power and authority. The so-called reform program has gained support from opponents of the Crown Prince in the palace, especially since the primary undeclared and agreed upon objective between the father and son is pulling powers of their uncle, the Prime Minister, and not to restructure the economy in favour to the public interest. Nevertheless, those in control in the palace are well aware that the supposed reform program would be enough to make the Crown Prince lose the confidence of the liberal elite and the moderate opposition, who are candidates to support him against his conservative opponents. Yet, both parties are no longer counting on him, whether to be a model of good governance and leading a serious economic reform as the opposition hopes, or to be a hand-thick person as loyalists and those in power of Al Khalifa want him to be⁽¹⁷⁾.

6- The Scenarios of the mandate of the Covenant

It is difficult to draw clear scenarios for the future of the two brothers Salman and Nasser, under the prospective shifts in the nature of the government. Especially if we assume –even if not certain- that the

Bahraini authorities provide a set of reforms that may affect the league involved in decision-making. It is also illogical to disregard the aspiration shown by Nasser to play an important role in the state and the support he gets from his father and those around him, in light of the fragility that characterize the performance of the Crown Prince and the weakness of his alliances.

Several evidences indicate the continuance of the Minister of the Royal Court (the reader of the King's thoughts and its implementer) to push Nasser to be ahead of his brothers, including the Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad (1975-present), who was appointed in March 2010 as a Personal Representative to the king. It reflects an apparent attempt to contain the protests of the sons of Sheikha Sabika, the first wife of the king, who appears in the media as the "first lady" in Bahrain, and whom children think they come first, in what they see their half-brother Nasser ahead of them in a fast speedy manner.

About this scene, we might be in front of a group of possible scenarios, including the following:

Scenario I: Nasser, a Crown Prince

I am not hesitant to say that Sheikh Salman does not represent the most appropriate option from the ruling crew's and Saudi Arabia perspective to become the future king of Bahrain. Perhaps those alongside a wide range of Sunni loyalists prefer Sheikh Nasser for reasons mentioned above.

Nevertheless, the scenario of overthrowing Salman and appointing Nasser to replace him may form a leap that carries implications that are not trivial, and perhaps facing several dilemmas, including the following:

The first dilemma is the strong coalition which was built by the Crown Prince with the United States and Britain. Whereas, Sheikh Nasser's image reflects an image of an impetuous young man who lacks wis-

dom, and does not enjoy a close relationship with the West, exactly like the militant in the palace and the Prime Minister's Court.

Yet, it is indefinite whether this dilemma has been inflated as part of the equation, in the light of the Saudi approach that might have a bigger impact than the West. Perhaps the American-British submission to the blackmail practiced by those in power in the royal palace who do not hesitate to direct vitriol to America and Britain through MPs, loyal societies and Al-Watan newspaper⁽¹⁸⁾, is seen as an indicator of the probability that the West could give up on Salman. Especially since some voices believe that their lengthy investment in the Crown Prince did not come fruit, and some of these voices sees the alliance with the real rulers of the country comes at first than holding on to Salman who lacks many of the qualities of leadership and firmness from their point of view.

The Wikileaks website revealed that the analysts in Washington in 2009 noticed and after "analyzing the (behavior) of the leadership in the royal family of Bahrain it is more likely that Prince Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and (his younger brother) Prince Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa are emerging significant targets". The leaked document also pointed out the lack of State Department to information on the princes, and asked for "reports on the scope of their influence within the family, personality traits, and disciplines of knowledge, and if they use drugs or consume alcohol or cause problems within the royal family. Also if they have any friends among Shiite Muslims, who usually stand behind the protests taking place in Bahrain"⁽¹⁹⁾.

The West making up its mind to put Salman in power after his father may not be this certain, especially when we recall that the late Jordanian king Hussein Bin Talal made up his mind to transfer the mandate of the Covenant from his brother Hassan to his son Abdullah II few weeks prior to his death in 1999.

As well as the Qatari Prince who was able to transfer

the power from his eldest son Meshaal to younger son Tamim easily.

The second dilemma is that Shiite citizens prefer Sheikh Salman on his brother Nasser, where an important sector of the Sunnis may prefer Nasser, yet, they will not be able to reject Salman. Under these complex circumstances, it is difficult for the regime to ignore the negative position taken by the Shiites from Nasser, who they see as militant and violator of human rights.

The ruling family is not used to taking the opinion of the people into account in such matters or even other less important matters. However, the appointment of Nasser as a Crown Prince may deepen the Bahraini dispute, and lead to strengthen the opposition forces' position of rejecting the monopoly of power to Al Khalifa. It may also enshrine the slogan "the people want to overthrow the regime", and increase the Western suspicions in the ability of the Khalifi regime on making a political settlement of the ongoing Bahraini issue.

The presence of Nasser on the top of the pyramid in the state clearly means the continuation of the policy of the iron fist, cleansing and naturalization, and all that is dragged by it that is deepening the political crisis in the country.

Scenario II: a double-headed Kingdom

In case it was difficult for the Khalifi family to replace Salman with Nasser for reasons related to the unity of the family and not having a third option from the king's sons as the readiness of Khalid bin Hamad (1989- present) for this task is still unclear. Khalid is the fifth son of the king of Bahrain, and is married to King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia daughter, and who is believed to be a copy of Nasser. To ensure the monarchy continues to Hamad sons, a double-headed Kingdom scenario can be put up: Salman and Nasser, the first a king, and the second a Prime Minister, or a Crown Prince, even though Salman has always showed his son Isa as his successor.

the Future of the Mandate of the Covenant in Bahrain

It is known that during the reign of the late Emir Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa (1933- 1999), the Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa was the true ruler of the country, and this scenario is available to be repeated again.

Moreover, when Mohammed bin Rashid was a Crown Prince in Dubai he was the true ruler of Dubai emirate under the rule of his brother Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum. Sheikh Mohammed has settled the mandate of the Covenant to his son when he became the ruler of Dubai, and as we know Nasser bin Hamad is married to the daughter of the Ruler of Dubai.

In Abu Dhabi, the rule of the late Sheikh Zayed moved to a dual: the ruler of Abu Dhabi Khalifa

and his brother Mohammed who was appointed as Crown Prince. But the latter apparently is who stands up for the management of the governance affairs.

The choice of the double-headed Kingdom was experienced in Bahrain, Dubai and Abu Dhabi and it has guarantee the family cohesion, but it could not guarantee to Salman to set his son in the mandate of the Covenant.

This scenario means that the power will go for Nasser and not Salman with all that it represents of a victory for the Saudi approach who will intensify the tensions and deepen it in Bahrain.

Conclusion

The Crown Prince will have to seriously take on convincing his father, loyalists, oppositionists and Saudi Arabia that he is able to save their interests, under the roof of one country and one home.

But perhaps he is supposed to put in his mind the possibilities of overthrowing him, as the political movement should also take that in mind. Furthermore, Nasser has to be expecting alongside the new position if the king issued a royal order in regard, that there would necessarily be controversy and an increase in the unrest and tension as well as an increase in the western concerns about the efficacy of the line led by King Hamad who plunged the country into an unprecedented predicament .

I might think it is likely that Nasser opportunities may increase whenever his father was able to quell the unprecedented uprising that permeated Bahrain. Where the position of the Crown Prince is reinforced with the existence of a public movement, under the belief of some parties in the family that Salman may be one of the keys to a comprise with this movement.

This is not a call for an alliance between the Crown Prince and the opposition, as it would be a rush to consider them in an objective alliance. This surely is not making Salman cheer for the protests, where he goes on giving cover to suppress the protests through the behavior of public relations practiced inside and outside Bahrain. But the opposition societies lead by Al Wefaq still clings to him as an ally in a family dominated by militancy in its leaders.

Bahrain is at a crossroads, and the continuation of the current conditions, or the first or second scenario becoming true does not hold any goodness to Bahrain. And perhaps the scenario of a democratic consensus, which is supposed to include enabling the legislative institution of authorizing the name of the king and his Crown Prince, as well as resolving any conflicts that might occur in regard, is a condition that could lead to not allow a person, no matter who he is to control Bahrain. The elected institution is supposed to be the decision-maker, not only in the choosing the Prime Minister and forming the government, but also in deciding on choices of the ruling family of the person who shall take on the monarchy, as was done in Kuwait while the Council of the Nation approved Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad an Emir of the State in 2006.

Footnote

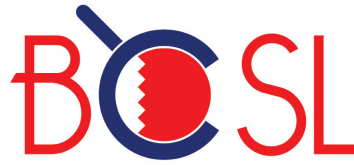
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2- Al-Wasat newspaper, January 12, 2012: <http://www.alwasatnews.com/data/2012/3403/pdf/spt4.pdf>.

3- For the Crown Prince initiative, see: Gulf Daily News, Manama, March 13, 2012. <http://www.alwasatnews.com/3110/news/read/532237/1.html>.

4- For more details about the political behavior of Sheikh Salman, also read: Abbas Busafwan, The Crown Prince, a keeper of his father's approach, in: The Structure of Tyranny in Bahrain: A study in the Power Balances in the Ruling Family, Bahrain Centre for Studies in London BCSL, 11 September 2012 <http://www.bcsl.org.uk/ar/publications/516-bahrain-structure-tyranny-power>.

- 5- For more details about the political behavior of Sheikh Salman, also read: Abbas Busafwan, The Crown Prince, a keeper of his father's approach, in: The Structure of Tyranny in Bahrain: A study in the Power Balances in the Ruling Family, Bahrain Centre for Studies in London BCSL, 11 September 2012 <http://www.bcsl.org.uk/ar/publications/516-bahrain-structure-tyranny-power>.
- 6- Bahrain Center for Human Rights: <http://www.bahrainrights.org/ar/node/4519>.
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- 19- http://wikileaks-a.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/blog-post_18.html.



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About BCSL

There has been an increasing talk about the Kingdom of Bahrain and the political trends and challenges the country is facing since the increase of the political crisis started on February 14th 2011 when Bahrain emerged as a part of the so called “Arab Spring Revolts” that roiled Arab world in 2011.

This has raised fundamental questions about Bahrain’s sophisticated ever political issues, despite, that Bahrain is located and surrounded by, as described as, conservative and stabilized countries.

The international interest about Bahrain, and at the same time the lack of insightful readily available information, are behind the drive to establish, on the 3rd of May 2012, “The Bahrain Center for Studies in London (BCSL)”, as an independent research centre, aims to, study the case and status of the uprising in Bahrain, its influential factors and expected future affairs.

BCSL will prepare and publish researches and studies and will also organize debating sessions evolving around the domestic affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain and its strategic aspects related to political, economic and security policies and including its relation at regional and international levels.

BCSL encourages discussions and dialogues in respect of Bahrain, and seeks to increase the interest of researchers, decision-makers, and actors in public opinion and motivate them to address the different aspects of the issues of Bahrain.



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BCSL wishes that this will contribute to a sound understanding and insightful of Bahrain case.

BCSL interests:

BCSL is mainly concerned with all issues related to Bahrain within the context of its regional and the international relations and politics in particular that relates to the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) states.

Research interests programs include, but not limited to, the followings:

1. Political Issues.
2. Political Association & Parties, Trade Unions and Civil Society Institutions.
3. Human Rights Issues.
4. Legal and Constitutional Affairs.
5. The issues of Security, Defense and armed equipment
6. Media
7. The links and entanglements between Bahrain issues and other GCC States, in a regional and international context.
8. Economic and Oil

BCSL also pays particular attention to the political/ democratic development of the GCC states and other Arab countries.

For ideas of research, and if interested to write about one of the above listed topics, please communicate with the Head of BCSL through the following e-mail address: director@bcsl.org.uk

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Abbas Busafwan: is a Bahraini -based in London journalist and writer who specialize in political and parliamentary affairs. He was the former Chief Editor of Aswaq Economical Newspaper, the former Deputy Chief Editor in Al-Ayam Newspaper, and former Head of local news in Al-Wasat Newspaper. He has participated in dozens of meetings and seminars, and has published several working papers and studies on the situation in Bahrain.

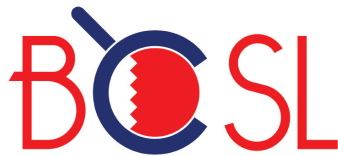
BCSL has published the following papers for the researcher:

- 1- Bahrain 2014: Possible Scenarios of Settlement, in: Bahrain: Strategic Report 2013, 15 January 2013.
- 2- The Structure of Tyranny in Bahrain A study of the Balance of power within the ruling family, 26 December 2012.
- 3- Bahrain: "Fragile" Constitutional Amendments, boosting up the Crisis, and not resonating locally and internationally, 29 May 2012.

The Hidden Conflict the Future of the Mandate of the Covenant in Bahrain

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