

Hundreds of Bahrainis join call to end US support for Bahrain gov't

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NEW YORK, N.Y., May 24 2011 — In a response that surprised U.S. organizers of a campaign calling on the United States government to repudiate its partnership with the Al Khalifa regime in Bahrain, hundreds of people from Bahrain joined in signing the Campaign for Peace and Democracy's launching statement "End U.S. Support for Bahrain's Repressive Government."

"The statement was originally circulated for signatures in the United States, but we have been deeply moved by the fact that hundreds of Bahrainis have added their names," said Joanne Landy, CPD Co-Director. "Given the violent government crackdown in Bahrain, the very act of signing is incredibly courageous. Bahraini signers have implored us to pressure the Obama administration to decisively repudiate its support of their brutal and authoritarian government."

On May 16, the New York-based Campaign for Peace and Democracy (CPD) began circulating its statement, which has thus far gathered more than 1200 signatures including those of Ed Asner, Medea Benjamin, Noam Chomsky, Martin Duberman, Daniel Ellsberg, Mike Farrell, Chris Hedges, Adam Hochschild, Jan Kavan, Kathy Kelly, Dave Marsh, Frances Fox Piven, Katha Pollitt, Alix Kates Shulman and Cornel West. The statement is below and on the CPD website. Signatures are still being accepted. The statement will be sent to President Obama, Secretary of State Clinton, and key members of Congress, as well as to domestic and international media.

In the United States, Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR) gave organizational endorsement to the statement. Stephen Soldz, PsySR president, stated, "We cannot be silent. Many of our members are health providers. The government of Bahrain has arrested nearly 50 doctors and other health providers, many of whom have been tortured. Their 'crime' is refusing to let injured protesters die and informing the world press about the abuses they witnessed. [See the report by Physicians for Human Rights.]

In the face of mounting complaints against Washington for muting its criticisms of repression in Bahrain, President Obama did say in his May 19 speech on the Middle East, "...we have insisted both publicly and privately that mass arrests and brute force are at odds with the universal rights of Bahrain's citizens. The only way forward is for the government and opposition to engage in a dialogue, and you can't have a real dialogue when parts of the peaceful opposition are in jail." However, in the same speech Obama referred to Bahrain as a "friend" and partner" of the U.S., thus signaling that the massive human rights violations in that country would not stand in the way of continuing U.S. support for the regime or the continuing presence of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, a naval force supporting an interventionist foreign policy.

In words reminiscent of the Administration's disgracefully neutral stand on the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt up until the last moment, when the Ben Ali and Mubarak regimes were clearly no longer sustainable, President Obama has called on both the government and the opposition in Bahrain to "engage in dialogue." What is needed now, however, is not episodic toothless reprimands to Bahrain's government or pressure on the opposition to engage in dialogue with the regime, but a clear U.S. break with the Al Khalifa government. This would involve:

- An unambiguous statement from Washington that because of the atrocious government repression, Bahrain is not a "partner" or "friend" of the U.S.

- An immediate end to all U.S. aid to Bahrain
- Vigorous condemnation of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for sending in forces at the request of Bahrain's government to back up the repression

CPD has launched this campaign in order to build pressure on Washington to stop propping up the Al Khalifa government. The brave people of Bahrain deserve no less.

For the full statement, [click here](#).