

## ***“WILL THE WORLD OPEN THEIR EYES TO CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN BAHRAIN?”***

***International ‘Eye for Freedom’ Protest condemns ongoing violence against forgotten ‘Arab Spring’: “No more arrests from hospital beds!”***

***Rallies to be held in Sydney and Brisbane 12pm today (details below)***

As Bahraini pro-democracy protesters dodge bullets and tear gas canisters today, human rights groups in the UK, Ireland, Canada, Switzerland and Australia will launch internationally coordinated solidarity events to condemn the ongoing crackdown.

***“Bahraini security forces are blinding protesters who are peacefully asking for their basic human rights!”***, said Abdul Elah Al-Hubaishi, a 34 year old civil engineer from Bahrain who was granted a protection visa in Australia last year.

***“An estimated one-hundred Bahrainis have suffered serious eye injuries after being shot by police with tear gas grenades and shotguns loaded with birdshot pellets”.***

The ‘Eye 4 Freedom’ campaign is developing a global solidarity network to support the pro-democracy movement in Bahrain and heighten international awareness about the fierce repression of the protesting majority by the US and Saudi supported Al Khalifa regime. Over 90 people have been killed and thousands injured since February last year.

***“Adequate treatment for all eye injuries must be made immediately available, especially to those in prison. The world can no longer turn a blind eye to the arrests being made from hospital beds!”***, said Jamilla Hanan, co-founder of the ‘Eye 4 Freedom’ campaign, based in London

There are currently over 500 political prisoners in Bahrain who are subjected to daily torture. Only five days ago, Nabeel Rajab, the President of both the Gulf Centre for Human Rights and the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights was arrested for tweeting by masked riot police. He has been sentenced to three months jail provoking outrage worldwide. His family and lawyers have been denied visiting rights sparking concerns that he is undergoing serious torture.

Medics have also been heavily targeted, arrested and tortured, for treating the injured. Rula Al-Saffar, President of the Bahrain Nursing Society, was recently acquitted from her sentence after being detained for five months last year and tortured on a daily basis.

She said, ***“We were treating the injured day and night throughout the crisis. We did not sleep for four or five days but we never thought that the regime would honour us by detaining us”.***

She continued, ***“All hospitals have been militarized in Bahrain. Protesters can no longer enter because once they do they are detained. People’s homes are being arranged into health clinics. We train people to be first aiders then every area self-organises their own clinics. The Bahrain Nursing Society has trained a thousand people in less than a year to be first aiders”.***

Four medics remain in detention, including Ibrahim Al-Dimistani, General Secretary of the Bahrain Nursing Society, and twenty-eight are still in court.

***“What is happening in Bahrain is barbaric and it is being supported by the US and the Gulf States under the watch of the UN! The Saudi and Bahrain regimes must be displaced for the people’s demands for basic human rights and freedom to be met. We call on the UN and the international community at large to step up the pressure and take meaningful action!”***, said Ahmed Al-Araibi, a Bahraini human rights defender and a member of the Eye 4 Freedom campaign based in Brisbane, Australia.

***“Thawra hatta al Nasr! Revolution until victory! We will not be the Arab Spring that is forgotten!”***

***MEDIA CONTACTS:***

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**Rally details:**

Sydney – 12pm, Town Hall, City.

Brisbane – 12pm, Queens Park.

London – 2pm outside Bahrain Embassy. 30 Belgrave Square, SW1X 8QB

For more information, see <http://www.eye4freedom.org/category/protests/>