

THINKING MATTERS

With Soman Baby



Bahrain Against Iranian Interference

Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, met UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings, and presented a formal complaint, this week.

And the complaint was against "Iran for its blatant violations and the continued unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain".

Shaikh Khalid also explained to UN why Bahrain was constrained to withdraw the Kingdom's ambassador from Iran and why Bahrain now considers the acting Iranian Ambassador to the Kingdom, as persona non grata.

This, I strongly believe, has been done to enhance the security of the Kingdom and the safety of its people and protect its interests. And Iran must seriously, and immediately, pay attention, to reviewing and changing its stance, particularly towards Bahrain, if it wants to maintain good neighbourliness.

It is saddening for our newspapers to report that dangerous explosives found in some villages of Bahrain, and those that have killed and injured many security personnel and civilians in the last few months, can be directly linked to Iran.

The Ministry of Interior has even foiled an attempt recently to smuggle highly dangerous explosives and several automatic weapons and ammunition, into the country, by sea, from the Iranian waters.

No wonder then that Shaikh Khalid vehemently says, "Iran has chosen the path of escalation in an attempt to exert control over its neighbours by continuing to interfere in internal affairs, exploitation of extremist groups, the provision of safe haven to fugitives and the opening of training camps for terrorist groups, smuggling arms and explosives, that resulted in citizens, expatriates and security personnel being targets of murder and criminal acts that so far claimed 16 lives from security personnel and injured 3,000".

While Bahrain has been fully committed to the principles of good neighbourliness and mutual respect, Iran is flouting International norms, with its interference.

From the "Country Reports on Terrorism 2014", a United States Department of State Publication, of Bureau of Counterterrorism, we can see how certain countries are still not on the right side - when it comes to the security of nations.

Published in June 2015, the document lists Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria as "State Sponsors of Terrorism".

To designate a country as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, the US Secretary of State must determine that "the government of such country has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism".

And once a country is designated, it remains a State Sponsor of Terrorism until the designation is rescinded in accordance with set statutory criteria.

Anyone can check the report at this web address: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/239631.pdf>

Iran is unlikely to get its designation rescinded if it continues this way. I am giving below just two of the many things this report mentions about Iran.

"In March, Israeli naval forces boarded the Klos C cargo ship in the Red Sea off the coast of Sudan. On board, they found 40 M-302 rockets, 180 mortars, and approximately 400,000 rounds of ammunition hidden within crates of cement labeled "Made in Iran" and believed to be destined to militants in the region".

"Iran has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in support of Lebanese Hizballah in Lebanon and has trained thousands of its fighters at camps in Iran. These trained fighters have used these skills in direct support of the Assad regime in Syria and, to a lesser extent, in support of operations against ISIL in Iraq".

This report on 2014, however, does not take into account this year's war in Yemen caused by Houthi rebels, with Iranian support, destabilizing a legitimate Yemeni government.

After the recent US-Iran Nuclear treaty that ended in Iran's favour - which was supported by GCC countries - it is all the more important for Iran to shun interference in others' internal affairs. And to work for the progress of its own people.

Drug peddling lands British national in jail

DT News Network

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A Briton accused of peddling drugs will spend next ten years in Bahraini jail after the High Criminal Court has pronounced him guilty.

The 32-year-old defendant landed in police net after an officer in plain clothes lured him to sell BD100 worth of hashish. The operation was conducted following a tip-off. Two pocket digital scales as well as several small packets of hashish were seized from his apartment during police inspection.

During questioning, the defendant told the prosecutor that he began consuming hashish 10 years ago. But he began selling it just two months ago, he claimed.

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The public prosecution accused him of illicit drug consumption and peddling. Earlier, he pleaded not guilty to drug peddling. Judges at the High Criminal Court have also fined him BD5000 for his crime and ordered for his deportation once he completes his jail time.

Earlier, the court ordered for his mental assessment to determine his psychological condition.

37 inmates enroll in vocational courses

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As many as 37 inmates at the Reformation and Rehabilitation Centre in Jaw have started studies at the branch of the Nasser Centre for Rehabilitation and Vocational Training. The centre will provide them with advanced reformation programmes to assist them to get integrated into society.

The programme is part of the initiative of Supreme Council for Youth and Sport Chairman, Bahrain Olympic Committee President and Royal Charity Organisation Chairman HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa and Nasser Centre for Rehabilitation and Vocational Training to enhance cooperation between the centre and the Interior Ministry's General Directorate of Reformation and Rehabilitation, and the development strategy launched by Interior Minister Lt-General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa.

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