

# A haven for all faiths

Foreign Minister highlights the Kingdom's religious liberties

● He made the statement as he participated in the Ministerial Conference to Advance Religious Freedom, held in Washington, DC.

● Shaikh Khalid praises the role of the US in combatting terror activities.

Washington

Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, affirmed that religious freedom is an integral part of the history and identity of the Kingdom of Bahrain, adding that it is guaranteed by the Constitution and by the pioneering initiatives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

He cited the Bahraini Declaration which reflects Bahrain's experience in promoting religious freedom, in addition to the establishment of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Co-existence and the inauguration of the King Hamad Chair for Interfaith Dialogue and Peaceful Coexistence at the University of Sapienza in Rome.

"This represents a global model of peaceful coexistence and religious freedom in which assures the Kingdom of Bahrain's commitment in preserving the nature of Bahraini society, its variety, diversity, tolerance, coex-



Shaikh Khalid with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.



Shaikh Khalid at the global ministerial conference.

istence, openness and respect for different societies and peoples," he said.

He made the statement as he participated in the Ministerial conference to Advance Religious Freedom, held in Washington DC, organised by the US Department of State and attended by representatives of governments and civil society organisations from around the world.

He expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Mike Pompeo, for hosting this important conference, which brings together a number of allies and friends from around the world to work to ensure religious freedom everywhere, and to protect this fundamental human right of all persons.

He stressed the need to redouble the efforts of the international community to eliminate the rhetoric of extremism, hatred and sectarianism and adopt a collec-

tive stance to curb the spread of extremist ideas in media and various social networks, and to confront terrorist organisations such as Da'ash, Al Nusra, Hizbollah and others, which threaten the region and impose their struggle to preserve religious diversity and peaceful coexistence.

He also praised the efforts of the United States in combating these terrorist organisations, including the recognition of the seriousness of Hizbollah's terrorist organisation and its keenness to work continuously with the allies in order to deter the party and all those who support or finance it.

Separately, Shaikh Khalid, met with the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, in the framework of the Minister's official visit to the friendly United States of America.

Shaikh Khalid hailed the distinguished level of historic strategic bilateral relations between

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We need collective stances to eliminate the rhetoric of extremism, hatred and sectarianism.”

SHAIKH KHALID

Bahrain and the friendly United States of America, which are constantly developing and flourishing at all levels.

He added that this development reflects the priority given by both countries to these relations and their keenness on bolstering all means of bilateral cooperation, mainly in the fields of politics, security, military, economics, trade and other fields.

Shaikh Khalid also expressed his appreciation of the central role played by the US in strengthening international cooperation and working with the countries

in the region for their benefit, as well as solving all issues in a way that preserves their security and stability, wishing the US further progress and prosperity.

Pompeo expressed his pleasure to meet with Shaikh Khalid, stressing the keenness of the United States to enhance cooperation at all levels.

He also expressed his appreciation of Bahrain for hosting the Peace to Prosperity workshop and all its crucial outcomes, hailing the efforts exerted by the Kingdom to establish peace and security in the region.

Shaikh Khalid also held discussions with US President's Senior Adviser Jared Kushner, on the sidelines of his official visit to the United States of America.

The Minister affirmed that the close friendship and strategic alliance between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United States of America is witnessing continuous progress and broad diversifi-

cation covering the various fields of political, security, economic and trade co-operation, which reflects the great importance and fruitful results of this cooperation in the interests of both countries and peoples, which also reflect a long history of friendly relations, joint work, co-ordination and continuous efforts to move forward to a broader horizons at all levels.

He commended the concrete and outstanding efforts of the US administration and Kushner to promote security and peace in the region and his great efforts to organise the Peace to Prosperity Workshop recently hosted by the Kingdom in support of the economy of the brotherly Palestinian people and achieve its aspirations for development and prosperity, confirming the support of the Kingdom of Bahrain for the efforts exerted by the United States of America for the benefit of the peoples of the region.

## Co-operation discussed



Labour and Social Development Minister Jameel Humaidan, the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) Board Chairman, received Representatives Council member Ahmed Al Amer and discussed with him ways of boosting co-operation in the labour and social fields. He stressed the ministry's keenness on co-operation with the Representatives Council to serve citizens, lauding the council's role in supporting projects and legislation aimed at boosting citizens' welfare.

## Three face trial for forcing housemaid into vice trade

TDI | Manama

Three Asians who "sold" a housemaid and forced her into prostitution will stand trial before the High Criminal Court on July 29, 2019, it has been confirmed.

The trio, which involved two men and a woman, assisted the victim in escaping from her employer's house, after promising her a job with better pay.

Capital Governorate Prosecution Chief Prosecutor Isa Al Ajman confirmed in a statement that the female defendant contacted the victim through a social media network and helped her escape, in co-operation with one of the male defendants, then moved her to an apartment in Gudaibiya area in the Capital Governorate, where she was locked up.

Mr Al Ajman explained that the two defendants took the victim's mobile phone away from her and forced her to have sexual intercourse with different men, customers, in return for amounts they, the defendants, collected.

"The perpetrators then handed over the woman to an Asian man in return for a certain amount. She was also forced by the third suspect to

practise prostitution.

"The victim later managed to contact the embassy of her country seeking help. The embassy reported the matter to the police, which rescued the woman and apprehended the three suspects," Mr Al Ajman said in a statement posted by the Public Prosecution on its official Instagram page.

The Chief Prosecutor also clarified in the statement that the Public Prosecution immediately initiated its investigation into the case once it was reported.

He said the victim's statements were heard and she was shifted to the Expats Protection Centre (anti-human trafficking shelter) in Northern Sehla.

Mr Al Ajman confirmed that the suspects were interrogated and detained, adding that witnesses' testimonies and the results of police investigations were reviewed.

"The incident confirms that all the defendants were carrying out trafficking in persons after controlling the victim and her independence by forcing her into prostitution.

"The suspects were referred to court for trial while they remain in detention," he added.

## Three sentenced for anti-national activities

TDI | Manama

The Fourth High Criminal Court has sentenced three Bahraini men for their involvement in the distribution of leaflets calling for civil disobedience, forcing shopkeepers to close their shops and resisting arrest in Malkiya village last year.

One of the defendants was sentenced to six months imprisonment for resisting arrest while two got two months for possessing the leaflets. Two others were acquitted by the court.

Court files show that the suspects apparently intimidated and forced commercial shops

owners and workers in Malkiya village near Hamad Town to shut down their shops on February 14 as part of a so-called "disobedience".

The details of the case show that Hamad Town Police was notified about the defendants distributing leaflets issued in different languages by "February 14 Coalition", which is a terrorist group responsible for numerous deadly attacks in Bahrain.

The defendants were attempting to force commercial shop workers in the village to shut their doors throughout the day.

When a team of police force

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The defendants assaulted on-duty policemen and resisted arrest.”

PUBLIC PROSECUTORS

arrived at the spot, the defendants tried to resist them and two of them were arrested while others fled the scene.

The arrestees were referred to the Public Prosecution, where they confessed to their crime.

The defendants told the interrogators that they had agreed on the previous day to force

shopkeepers to shut down their shops on February 14 last year and to prevent students from going to schools on the same day.

Despite that the leaflets they distributed were issued by February 14 Coalition, the defendants denied in the interrogation that they had any relation with the notorious terrorist group.

The Public Prosecution accused them of assaulting on-duty policemen while resisting arrest and causing the injuries mentioned in the official coroner's report, in addition to possessing publications that promote the change of the regime.