

INTERVIEW OF HE INTERIOR MINISTER
WITH EDITORS-IN-CHIEF OF LOCAL
NEWSPAPERS

His Excellency Interior Minister General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, held a meeting with the editors-in-chief of local newspapers, during which he discussed several security and national issues related to the dangers of the ideology associated with Wilayat al-Faqih, the repercussions of Iranian attempts to influence the stability of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the Ministry's efforts to promote national awareness and community security.

HE the Minister of Interior praised the leadership and wisdom of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, which represent the comprehensive national framework around which people from all walks of life rally. He stressed that the security, sovereignty and stability of the homeland are non-negotiable matters.

He emphasised that the Iranian aggression is not a border war but rather covers all of Bahrain. He also pointed out that “parallel patriotism” has no place in a country of authenticity, loyalty, and national belonging, and that it is countered by regulating religious discourse, intellectual fortification, and integration among family, schools, religious institutions, and the media. He further addressed the danger of the Islamic Jurist (Wilayat al-Faqih) project as a transnational political project, explaining that the Ministry's strategy is based on monitoring extremist ideologies, cutting off their funding sources, and protecting society from them.

HE Interior Minister affirmed that the Shiite component in Bahrain is an integral part of the national fabric, predating these organisations historically and far too broad to be reduced to them.

He revealed that all necessary legal measures are being taken to thwart the plans of the Wilayat al-Faqih, apprehend its members, and arrest agents working for the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. He emphasised that these measures are the result of cumulative efforts and work that preceded the targeting attempts and were not a reaction to them. He also addressed the legal prohibitions on promoting the Wilayat al-Faqih ideology or cooperating with groups affiliated with the Revolutionary Guard, as well as trends toward increasing penalties for crimes of treason and espionage.

He stressed that these exceptional circumstances, the heinous attacks, and the security challenges we have faced necessitate that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states move from cooperation and coordination to security integration.

Question: The heinous Iranian aggression continues, directing its missiles and drones towards Bahrain, committing war crimes against citizens and residents, and targeting civilian infrastructure without regard for the rights of neighbourliness. What is your view about the issue?

Bahrain is a country committed to peace and has never attacked Iran. It is geographically limited. Therefore, these Iranian terrorist attacks are not merely a border war but rather cover all of Bahrain without exception. With this heinous targeting, Iran has violated the principles of good neighbourliness. How can there be any cooperative relationship with a regime that has violated our security and sovereignty, threatened our present and fu-

ture, and targeted our national unity and social fabric? We have dealt with Iran's proxies, thwarted their ideology and plans, and rallied the patriotism and loyalty of all the people of Bahrain in the face of these heinous Iranian attacks.

Question: Security measures under these exceptional circumstances are extremely delicate and complex, with fundamental security principles. What are the most significant challenges facing security operations at this critical phase?

First and foremost, the wisdom and leadership of HM the King represent the unifying national framework around which the people, in all their diversity, rally and upon which they operate, working to strengthen the state and preserve its status. HM the King's directives have enabled Bahrain to solidify its position, strength, and capabilities to deal efficiently and professionally with these exceptional circumstances by building a sophisticated strategic system over the past years. The security, sovereignty, and stability of the nation are non-negotiable pillars, and anyone who transgresses these boundaries places themselves in direct confrontation with the law and the state.

I would also like to commend the comprehensive measures taken by the esteemed government, headed by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, and its role in addressing the challenges of this difficult period through a sophisticated and decisive system and vision. This vision relies on strengthening national preparedness and coordinating governmental and national efforts to confront various challenges and emerging issues with a high level of readiness.

Here, I would like to address a specific issue, by way of example and not limitation, but one that underscores the increased complexity of current challenges. Previously, we dealt with terrorist organisations as “overt entities.” Still, now we are dealing with clandestine organisations that focus on raising funds through covert means and using them to support those working to destabilise the country. They engage in activities hostile to states and work to control religious institutions, removing them from the oversight and control of official bodies. Simultaneously, they work to control citizens' attitudes, thoughts, and feelings through extremist and inflammatory rhetoric.

Based on accumulated security experience, I can say that building sustainable security is not achieved through temporary reactions but rather through a long-term strategic vision grounded in a state mindset of moderation, the rule of law, and the view of security as a shared responsibility covering institutions, legislation, society, and public awareness. Real security is achieved by building strong institutions that strengthen societal trust and support stability.

Question: You described “parallel patriotism” as one of the outcomes of the Wilayat al-Faqih. How can official and societal institutions protect young people from transnational ideological loyalties?

Thanks to God, the Kingdom of Bahrain has been able to expose the intentions and dangers of this



extremist ideology, which by its very nature has created negative and unacceptable concepts, including what is called “parallel patriotism.” This concept has no place in the context of genuine loyalty and national belonging. Confronting it requires regulating religious discourse, fostering intellectual fortification, and cooperation between families, schools, and the media, in addition to security and legal measures. The family represents the starting point for fostering a sense of belonging; the school reinforces the concept of sovereignty; the places of worship deliver a sound and enlightening message; and the media conveys the truth credibly. When these roles are fulfilled, belonging transforms into a deeply rooted behaviour, not merely a slogan.

In this context, I commend the Ministry of Education's role in shaping national generations through a well-thought-out educational approach. I also commend the role of the Ministry of Information in promoting national unity and loyalty, as well as that of the Ministry of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments, especially in regulating religious discourse.

Question: Given the ongoing attempts by some external parties to undermine countries' stability through transnational ideological projects, what is the Ministry's strategy to prevent the export of extremist ideology linked to Iran?

The Wilayat al-Faqih, in its transnational political dimension, represents an approach that transcends jurisprudential or doctrinal interpretations. Its danger lies in its endeavour to create entities outside the state's framework. It has worked to distance religious and civil institu-

tions from state authority and has exploited the collection of funds through illicit means to reward opponents of the state.

Question: The so-called Ulema (Scholars) Council had a negative influence on some young people, and the Ministry of Interior's measures thwarted this scheme. Would you shed light on the measures taken?

The Ministry of Interior's strategy in this regard is based on three pillars: monitoring extremist ideas in their early stages, drying up their funding sources, and protecting society from them. The so-called “Ulema (Scholars) Council, which was dissolved by court order several years ago, was an unofficial organisation that overstepped its declared religious framework to become a front providing religious cover for a chaotic, transnational political project. This project aimed to distort enlightened awareness and weaken national unity. It was dealt with within the framework of the law to protect society and the Shiite community in Bahrain from attempts at political manipulation and exploitation.

Question: Is Bahrain facing a form of soft warfare targeting minds and national loyalty, and what role is required of the state, families, schools, Majalis, and religious figures to protect young people?

The data indicate attempts to shape the awareness and loyalty of young people through indirect means, such as educational content, publications, or speeches presented as advice but conveying a different message.

Confronting this pattern requires cooperation between the state, families, schools, Majalis, and religious figures. The state differentiates in its dealings with

those affected by this discourse between those who have been misled and need to correct their understanding and those who have chosen this path willingly, tailoring treatment to the nature of each case. Those who persist in their actions will be held accountable under the law.

Question: To what extent do intellectuals, thinkers, and academics bear a national responsibility in defending Bahraini identity against attempts to impose foreign agendas?

Intellectuals, thinkers, and academics play a direct role in confronting projects of subversion, viewing them as battles over concepts, identity, and national memory, not merely security battles. Indeed, this is the positive role of the intellectual: commitment to their homeland.

This responsibility necessitates clarifying the facts and countering misconceptions with reasoned arguments and knowledge, thereby helping establish a positive understanding of patriotism as a steadfast commitment. Bahrain cherishes its thinkers and intellectuals and relies on them for awareness and enlightenment.

Question: You mentioned the infiltration of Wilayat al-Faqih into mosques and religious centres, with some of them having been transformed into recruitment centres. What measures and controls are in place to prevent this from happening again?

Mosques and community centres (Maatams) hold a significant religious and social position, and the state is committed to preserving their rituals without restriction. However, under the law, it is not permissible to convert

places of worship or other venues into platforms for political mobilisation, ideological recruitment, or the dissemination of foreign agendas within society.

The measures are based on organisation, monitoring, coordination, and accountability, with those in charge of these sites responsible for protecting them from infiltration. The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the Council for Islamic Endowments play a key role in this regard.

Question: Some are trying to portray the security measures as being directed against a specific sect or social group. How do you respond to this claim, and how is a balance struck between national security and the protection of rights and freedoms?

This claim is inaccurate. The security measures are directed at political organisations linked to foreign entities to preserve society's cohesion and unity. The Shiite community in Bahrain is an integral part of the national fabric, predating these organisations historically, and far broader than can be reduced to them.

In reality, we distinguish between opinion and incitement, between religious practice and politicisation, and between individual transgressions and generalisations about social groups. This distinction is crucial for achieving a balance between maintaining security and safeguarding constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms. All attempts to undermine national confidence and construct a propaganda narrative against the security measures, which are fundamentally aimed at protecting Bahraini society, have yet to grasp that Bahrain has moved beyond these sectarian debates and that its citizens possess a high degree of awareness.