

United Nations Shocked by Bahrain's Execution of Three Activists



Manama, January 18 (RHC)-- The United Nations has expressed distress at the execution of three Shia Muslim activists in Bahrain over their alleged role in killing policemen during a pro-democracy demonstration.

"We are appalled at the execution by firing squad of three men in Bahrain on Sunday," UN human rights commissioner spokesman Rupert Colville said in a statement on Tuesday. Colville noted that the defendants' confessions were supposedly obtained under torture, and that their lawyers were not given access to all the evidence against them nor allowed to cross-examine prosecution witnesses.

"We again urge Bahrain to impose a moratorium on the use of death penalty," the top UN official said, adding that Manama should work to "abolish the death penalty definitively." Colville added there were "serious doubts whether the accused were provided with the right to fair trial."

On January 15, Bahrain executed Abbas al-Samea, 27, Sami Mushaima, 42, and Ali al-Singace, 21, by firing squad. The killings came a week after the Court of Cassation upheld death sentences against the trio after finding them guilty of killing three policemen, including an Emirati officer, in the northern village of

al-Daih back in March 2014.

Condemnations have poured in from across the world, even Bahrain's allies, against the executions. On Tuesday, the United States reprimanded Bahrain over the executions. "We're concerned that these executions occurred at a time of elevated tension in Bahrain," U.S. State Department spokesman John Kirby said.

Bahraini opposition al-Wafa'a Islamic Party announced in a statement late on Monday that it is turning to armed resistance as the only way to get legitimate public demands fulfilled in the face of the Al Khalifah regime's harsh crackdown in the country.

"We in al-Wafa'a declare that we have started a new phase. We have one hand in the streets and the other on the trigger," the party's leader, Sayed Morteza al-Sanadi, said.

"For six years we have been adhering to peaceful methods ... For six years we have been appealing to the whole world and in return we got nothing but tears," Sanadi added, vowing that al-Wafa'a "will exact punishment for the trio's blood."

Anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations on an almost daily basis ever since the popular uprising began in Bahrain in February 2011.

They are demanding that the Al Khalifah family relinquish power and let a just system representing all Bahrainis be established.

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