

Bahraini Protesters Slam Al Khalifa Regime's Ban on Friday Prayers



Manama, August 20 (RHC)-- Dozens of protesters have rallied in Bahrain to condemn a ban on holding Friday prayers and to denounce the Al Khalifah regime's crackdown on the majority Shia community. Demonstrators marched through the streets in Diraz after troops closed roads leading to the grand mosque, preventing them from gathering for prayers.

The protesters insisted on their rights to freedom of religion and belief and condemned the Manama regime's efforts to restrict them. Bahraini authorities have summoned or arrested more than a dozen Shia clerics over the past few weeks in a stepped-up crackdown on peaceful protests.

In a recent statement, a group of Bahrain clerics said the systematic suppression in Bahrain had reached the highest level ever. Religious clerics said members of the majority Shia community felt insecure and faced arrest or prosecution for attending religious congregations, specially Friday prayers.

On Thursday, a Bahraini court handed down a one-year prison sentence against Sheikh Ali Humaidan, the imam of the al-Zahra Mosque in the northern town of Hamad, on charges of "organizing illegal assemblies."

Bahraini authorities also handed down a three-year prison sentence to human rights activist Ghada Jamshir. The activist, an ardent campaigner for judicial reform in Bahrain and other Arab states in the Persian Gulf, was arrested at the Bahrain airport.

She is charged with engaging in political activities against the Manama regime, and publishing posts on social media critical of the current rulers.

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