

= Death of Abdulredha Buhmaid =

Abdulredha Mohamed Hasan Buhmaid (or Buhamaid , Arabic : ????????? ???? ??? ?????) was a 28 @-@ year @-@ old Bahraini protester shot by a live bullet in the head on 18 February 2011 . He died in hospital three days later , the seventh death in the Bahraini uprising .

Buhmaid was among a group of protesters who on 18 February marched toward the Pearl Roundabout following the funeral procession of protester Ali Abdulhadi Mushaima , who was killed four days earlier . When the protesters neared Pearl Roundabout , the army opened fire . Buhmaid collapsed to the ground , and blood poured from his head after it was hit by a bullet . The army opened fire twice more . Protesters regrouped after each round of shooting . Riot police finally intervened and dispersed protesters . Over one hundred protesters were injured , some seriously . Buhmaid was taken to Salmaniya hospital where attempts to revive him failed over the course of three days . He died on the afternoon of 21 February .

Several witnesses including journalists and medics accused authorities of shooting directly at protesters , preventing some ambulances from reaching the site and firing at others . The government however , denied those statements . It stated that warning shots were fired in the air and accused protesters of faking injuries . An investigation by a government @-@ appointed commission of inquiry blamed the army for Buhmaid 's death . The incident marked the first time that the Royal Bahraini Army was used to confront civilians , and at the time was considered " the bloodiest " incident since protests erupted .

Following the incident , the government offered dialogue which the opposition said they will only take part in after the withdrawal of the army . The general labor union called for a general strike . Internationally , the attack on protesters was condemned by Barack Obama and Human Rights Watch . High Representative of European Union expressed her deep concerns and called for restrain and immediate dialogue . Britain revoked over forty arms licenses to Bahrain after an earlier announcement that it would review them and German president canceled a planned visit to the country . Buhmaid is remembered by the opposition as a martyr , leader and symbol of peacefulness .

= = Short biography = =

Buhmaid (or Buhamaid , 28) was married and had three children . He lived in Malkiya , south west of Manama . According to his wife , he had strong ties with his brothers . In an interview with the Bahraini newspaper Al Wasat , she said he used to take part in any political event in his area . " He was hoping to be Malkiya 's first martyr and so he became " , she added .

= = Background = =

Inspired by the successful uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia , protests erupted in Bahrain on 14 February . During the day named as the Day of Rage , over 6 @,@ 000 people participated in fifty @-@ five demonstrations and political rallies in twenty @-@ five different locations throughout Bahrain . Security forces responded to protests by firing tear gas , rubber bullets , sound bombs and birdshot . More than thirty protesters were injured and Ali Mushaima died as a result of birdshot injury in his back . The following day , during the deceased funeral , another protester was killed the same way . Angry protesters marched to and occupied Pearl Roundabout . By nightfall , their numbers had swelled to over 10 @,@ 000 . On 16 February , thousands of protesters continued to occupy Pearl Roundabout .

On 17 February (later referred to as the Bloody Thursday) , police launched a pre @-@ dawn raid on sleeping protesters . Four protesters were killed and more than 300 were injured bringing the number of those killed in the events to six . Health workers and a journalist were allegedly attacked by security forces . The army was deployed following clearance of Pearl roundabout which then set up checkpoints and barriers . The Interior Ministry issued a warning to stay off the streets , and the army warned that it was ready to take " punitive measures " to restore order . Protesters resorted to

Salmaniya Hospital 's car parks where thousands of them protested against the government . All 18 Members of Parliament from Al Wefaq , the only opposition political party represented in Parliament , submitted their resignations .

= = Incident = =

On 18 February , over 50 @, @ 000 participated in the funerals of crackdown victims . One was held in Al Daih , another in Karzakan . The largest however , was in Sitra . At about 4 : 46 in the afternoon , about a thousand protesters , most of them young men who participated in Al Daih funeral of Ali Abdulhadi Mushaima marched toward Manama , defying the government ban on gatherings . By 5 : 18 they had reached a road junction ; to the right was Salmaniya hospital and to the left Pearl Roundabout . They turned left after a short pause . On their way , they clashed with riot police who withdrew from the site . Protesters continued their march removing barriers set by police a day ago .

By 5 : 30 protesters were 80 to 200 meters away from army forces stationed in Pearl Roundabout which " were armed with M16 assault rifles , Dilmun rifles and Browning .50 calibre machine guns mounted on top of armoured vehicles " . The protest was peaceful and protesters were " holding their hands in the air and chanting ' peaceful , peaceful ' " . Some were holding flowers . As protesters continued marching , army troops opened fire .

Abdulredha Buhmaid was among the protesters . He was shot by a bullet in the head , collapsed to the ground and in the words of a witness , " blood was rushing from his head " . Others sustained severe injuries inflicted by gunshots , two of whom also fell to the ground . Several eyewitnesses said army troops " gave no warning " , but one witness said he heard them issue a warning several minutes after the initial shooting . Another witness said they heard a " faint voice of someone over a loudspeaker in the distance but could not make out what the speaker was saying " .

Most protesters ran after hearing gunshots and a helicopter chased them . After shooting stopped , protesters regrouped . One youth picked a rock and headed toward the army , only to be stopped by four other protesters . A witness interviewed by Physicians for Human Rights said that he and other protesters moved closer to army forces following the initial shooting . According to him he asked " Why do you shoot us ? We had our hands up . We are peaceful . What do you want from us ? " , one soldier replied " I want you to leave . If you do not turn back , I have orders to shoot " . Arriving ambulances started evacuating the injured when army opened fire again .

When the shooting stopped , about fifty protesters started praying on the road , and few stood in front facing the army with their hands in the air . The army opened fire for a third time . The period of each shooting was short , because " people immediately started running away " , witnesses said . After that , riot police intervened , firing tear gas and birdshot to disperse protesters , inflicting more injuries among them .

A cameraman working for the Associated Press said he saw " army units shooting anti @-@ aircraft weapons , fitted on top of armored personnel carriers , above the protesters in apparent warning shots and attempts to drive them back from security cordons " . Bahraini photojournalist Mazen Mahdi said that the army shot " live fire from machine guns " and that paramedics were blocked from helping the wounded . " The first was a warning shot in the air . But after that , they just opened fire at the people ... They shot at the ambulances when they came in " , he added .

A senior emergencies researcher and medics interviewed by Human Rights Watch confirmed that some of the twelve ambulances sent were prevented by security forces from reaching the site . The Daily Telegraph said ambulances and paramedics " were shot at " and that " several were detained and at least one ambulance was impounded " . Michael Slackman of The New York Times reported that he and a colleague were " shot at from a helicopter " shortly after army opened fire on protesters . Associated Press witnesses , The Daily Telegraph , and The New York Times mentioned that army personnel positioned in high buildings and helicopters fired on protesters . Jalal Firooz , resigned MP of Al Wefaq , Bahrain 's main opposition party , said he saw soldiers fire on protesters . A report by three local rights groups mentioned that " photos of the injuries suggest that army aimed at the upper body area " .

Riot police chased down protesters who fled to Salmaniya , Bahrain 's main hospital . Security forces backed off after initially advancing toward the hospital and firing tear gas into it . That night , over seven thousand protesters staged an anti @-@ government sit @-@ in in hospital parks , described by The Guardian as " the only place in Manama where they now feel safe to gather in numbers " . The incident marked the first time that the Royal Bahraini Army was used to confront civilians , and at the time was considered " the bloodiest " incident since protests erupted .

= = = Casualties = = =

At least 120 people were injured according to medical officials . Salmaniya hospital was " overwhelmed " with casualties , some of whom were taken to private hospitals . Doctors said that nine of the thirty @-@ two casualties who reached Salmaniya hospital were in critical condition . Some medics cried while treating the injured , some of whom had bullets still lodged into their bodies , X @-@ rays showed . A doctor interviewed by Al Jazeera English pleaded for help from " all countries in the world " . Describing the situation in hospital as a war , Dr. Ghassan said , " They are shooting at people 's heads . Not at the legs . People are having their brains blown out " . Two doctors said they treated patients who " seemed to be [injured by] live bullets rather than shotgun pellets , judging by the entry and exit holes " .

Buhmaid was taken to Salmaniya hospital . Blood was still " pouring from his head and he was unconscious " . He was " clinging to life " in intensive care unit where doctors " struggled to stop his bleeding " . " This is a bullet , gunshot wound , direct to his head and he 's bleeding profusely from his nose , from his ear , his brain is shattered into pieces " , said a doctor . Buhmaid 's " brain was destroyed , but his body was still alive " . His clinical death prompted a nurse on 20 February to smash a glass @-@ framed image of the Prime Minister . Remaining in ICU for three days , Buhmaid was medically declared to be dead early in the afternoon of 21 February , becoming the seventh victim of the uprising .

Listing him under " Deaths Attributed to Security Forces " , the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry appointed by King Hamad to investigate the events stated that Buhmaid 's death " may be attributed to the BDF [army] " while also referring to the contrary result of the military investigation .

= = = Government account = = =

On the night of 18 February , Faisal al @-@ Hamar , then the Minister of Health , issued a press release aired on the national TV which denied there had been any deaths . He said the situation at Salmaniya hospital was calm and that only seven people were being treated for minor injuries . He also warned against what he called " rumors " spread in some satellite channels and websites . Bahrain 's ambassador to the United States said that if army forces did fire live ammunition , " Probably they were warning shots only " . " The forces that were used were proportional according to the law , they were legal , they were necessary because they were stopping the shops . The economy was hurting , the national economy . We had to take action and action was taken by the law , " he added . However he admitted protesters did not use live rounds and promised that " Investigations will happen . And they will continue " .

The army said that protesters defied its orders to evacuate the area . According to its statement , after at least fifteen minutes of repeating the same orders , soldiers fired warning shots to the air . It also alleged that protesters were accompanied by " a line of ambulances " out of which they took blood bags to " feign that they had been injured " . Military prosecutors carried out an investigation and concluded that the trajectory of the bullet that killed Buhmaid were inconsistent with the bullet having been shot by the BDF , on the basis of an ordnance expert 's report that concluded the shot was fired from a high elevation .

= = Aftermath = =

Following the incident , the government offered dialogue with opposition and ordered army to withdraw from Pearl Roundabout . On 19 February , army troops were replaced by riot police . Hundreds of protesters moved to the site from different locations . A standoff between protesters and riot police was created , until the latter suddenly moved away . Thousands of protesters re @-@ occupied the site following police withdrawal .

= = = Funeral = = =

Buhmaid 's funeral was held on 22 February in his village , Malkiya . Over 9 @,@ 000 participated in the funeral procession which started from roundabout 13 in Hamad Town and ended in Malkiya graveyard . At the same day during afternoon , over 100 @,@ 000 participated in a protest dubbed " March of loyalty to martyrs " in honor of the seven victims of the uprising .

= = = Medics ' trial = = =

In May 2011 , 47 doctors , nurses , and dentists were charged for their actions during the uprising . One of the charges was conducting unnecessary operations to Buhmaid , which led to his death . In a press conference , Minister of Justice said " Buhmaid was shot in the head and he underwent a surgery in the presence of the media . His head had been open in an exaggerated manner , which led to his death " .

= = Reactions = =

= = = Domestic = = =

Buhmaid 's family said they were sad for his death , but their pride had overcome it . Appearing on the national TV , the crown prince authorized by his father , the king , offered unconditional dialogue with opposition . He offered " condolences to the people of Bahrain for the painful days they are living " and asked them to remain calm . Opposition activists demanded withdrawal of army and resignation of government for the dialogue to begin . " [There is no] serious will for dialogue because the military is in the streets " , said Matar Matar , resigned MP of Al Wefaq . The general labor union called for an indefinite general strike " unless the army is pulled out from the streets and peaceful demonstrations are permitted " .

= = = International = = =

Barack Obama criticized the government actions . In reference to government of Bahrain and Yemen , he said " The United States condemns the use of violence by governments against peaceful protesters in those countries and wherever else it may occur " . Catherine Ashton , the High Representative of European Union demanded " restraint " from all parties and said that report of violence " deeply concerned " her . She called for dialogue to begin " without delay " . The United Kingdom revoked forty four arm licenses to Bahrain , twenty of them open licenses . Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt said " We are deeply concerned about the situation in Bahrain and the events which have led to the deaths of several protesters " .

German president canceled a planned trip to the country . " Freedom of assembly and freedom of speech in Bahrain have to be fully guaranteed " , a spokesman quoted him saying . Lawrence Cannon , then Canada 's Foreign Minister called the Bahraini government to " exercise restraint " and launch an investigation into protesters ' deaths . " Canada urges Bahrain to respect its citizens ' rights to freedom of expression and assembly , and to engage in peaceful dialogue with its people to address their concerns " , he added .

Human Rights Watch condemned the attack . " The Bahraini army has done what the Egyptian army did not do and exactly what the United States and its other partners urged it not to do -- it has

opened fire on its own people , " its Washington director said . Fareed Zakaria , CNN 's international affairs analyst , said that the crackdown on protesters was a " rash move that will enrage many of its people and cost the regime international prestige " . " This is a terrible mistake and they will pay a heavy price for it . The regime in Bahrain is doing something very rash and unwise ; it is trying to respond by using force and punitive measures . This is not going to work in the end " , he added .

= = Legacy = =

Buhmaid was the first person named a " field commander " by February 14 Youth Coalition , which also named their attempt to reoccupy Pearl Roundabout in the first anniversary of the uprising , " operation of the martyr leader Abdulredha Buhmaid " . His death was described by the online opposition newspaper , Bahrain Mirror , as a " legendary scene that will remain forever in the conscience of humanity " . A poster found in two articles of the aforementioned newspaper described Buhmaid as " the martyr who brought down an army with his peacefulness " .

Speaking to participants of a sit @-@ in front of United Nations building in Manama on 22 February 2012 , Ahlam al @-@ Khuza 'e of Al Wefaq said that shooting scene of Buhmaid was " the top manifestation of peacefulness " . On 29 February , opposition parties organized a gathering in Malkiya to honor Buhmaid . Thousands participated in the gathering including Isa Qassim , Bahrain Shias ' top religious figure .