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Bahrain protest deaths point to excessive police force

Amnesty International has condemned the heavy-handed tactics used by Bahrain's riot police earlier today after the second death in two days of protests calling for political reform in the tiny Gulf state.

Fadhel 'Ali Matrook was among a crowd of people mourning the death yesterday of 'Ali 'Abdulhadi Mushaima', killed in clashes between protesters and police, when he was shot dead by police earlier today in Bahrain's capital, Manama. Riot police are said to have opened fire on the crowd without warning during the funeral.

"This second killing within two days is both tragic and a very worrying development," said Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International's Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

"The Bahrain authorities must thoroughly investigate what occurred, stand down the police involved in these shootings and make clear to the police that the use of excessive force will not be tolerated."

"An independent investigation is also urgently required to establish the facts, particularly whether the level of force used by the police, both yesterday and today, can possibly be justified."

"Eyewitness reports of today's shooting received by Amnesty International suggest strongly that Fadhel 'Ali Matrook's death was caused by excessive force, in which case the police responsible must be brought to justice."

Over 10,000 people reportedly joined today's funeral procession for 'Ali 'Abdulhadi Mushaima', who died on Monday during clashes with riot police in the village of al-Daih, east of Manama.

An eyewitness told Amnesty International that police opened fired on the procession of mourners without warning, as they chanted slogans criticizing the government and calling for Bahrain to have a new constitution and a democratically elected government.

"Peaceful protesters were chanting 'Khalifa leave' and within minutes of the procession beginning, we got attacked by the riot police; bullets were showering the peaceful protesters and there was tear gas everywhere. Several wounded are being rushed to the hospital and many are screaming," Maryam Al-Khawaja, from the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, told Amnesty International.

Fadhel Ali Almatrook was shot dead close to al-Salmaniya hospital in Manama. According to the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights, more than 20 people required hospital treatment as a result of injuries caused by the riot police on Monday.

Monday's "Day of Rage" protests in Bahrain, organized on Facebook and Twitter and apparently inspired by unrest in Egypt and Tunisia, took place mainly in Shia villages around Manama.

"Like many in the region, those in Bahrain who feel their dignity has been compromised are demanding

change. The authorities must listen to these calls, rather than retaliating with violence,” said Malcolm Smart.

On Friday, Amnesty International highlighted the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain with its report [*Crackdown in Bahrain: human rights at the crossroads*](#).

The organization called on the government to ensure proper investigations into allegations of torture and other serious abuses by the security forces.

In August-September 2010, the Bahrain authorities swooped on 23 opposition political activists, detaining them incommunicado for two weeks during which some allege they were tortured.

The authorities have also curtailed freedom of expression, closing critical websites and banning opposition publications. Hundreds of people have been arrested or imprisoned for participating in protests.