

Marcel Khalifé: Sorry, I won't be going to Bahrain

I, the undersigned, Marcel Khalifé,

hereby extend a kind greeting and declare:

I have carried my pain and my commitment to the causes of the Arab nation. I have offered my contribution to expressing the pain and of forging a different future of humanity that behooves us and that reflects our aspirations.

Now, as I follow the affairs of Arab world and all the episodes of these sweeping popular revolutions, I am bound by the responsibility to give voice to the feeling of rage towards these bloodbaths in which Arab systems of oppression are drowning our cities, villages, and streets in a brutal reaction to the just and legitimate demands of the masses of our men and women, young and old, to enjoy freedom, democracy, and a better tomorrow.

I feel as though every bullet that is shot at a young demonstrator is being shot at my chest, and every club that breaks the bones of a child falls upon my body.

I feel rage, wild protestations, and an internal revolt bursting in my head, my conscience, and my tongue, and I feel a desire to hurl it all back at the faces of the murderers and purveyors of bloodshed, like any child or adult, young or old, there amidst the multitudes, struggling with pride and dignity to forge the future of the nation.

I stand in solidarity with those millions who cry out as they protest against suppression and death. I am one of them, inseparably. My blood is their blood, my voice is their voice, and my destiny is their destiny.

I sang for them, and they gave me the feeling that they were my kin from whom we derive strength to bring about the impossible.

I am one of them, and I confront those who shed their blood. I cannot betray their cause. What is happening in Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and elsewhere, is both an epic and a tragedy – an epic that has triumphed in Tunisia and Egypt, and shall triumph in all the other Arab countries, and a bloody tragedy that desperately seeks to arrest history.

For this reason, and because I cannot fail to be with my people in every Arab country, I apologize for not accepting the invitation to participate in the Spring of Culture Festival in Bahrain.

I can only stand in the campsite of freedom, demanding democracy and non-violence.

I do not take this stand only because I am an Arab who is committed to my nation's causes. I would take this stand even if I were not. It is, first and foremost, and human stand before it is a political stand.

Marcel Khalifé