

New National Unity initiative launched

Staff Reporter

As many as 45 prominent Bahrainis, under the chairmanship of former Labour Minister Abdulnabi Al Shoala, have launched a new initiative to promote unity in the Kingdom.

With members drawn from all walks of life and representing various economic, social and cultural segments, this group will try to heal the sectarian rifts resulting from the recent unrest.

The group will hold discussions with civil and political societies to ensure that things return back to normal. As part of the initiative, the group members, who include bankers, auditors, academics, doctors and businessmen, have already formed three committees for the planning and organising of programmes intended to increase unity.

"Our plan is to see how best we can contribute to unity in the nation by combating the efforts of some vested interests who want to disintegrate the nation on sectari-



● Mr. Al Shoala

an basis, particularly dividing Sunnis and Shias. This has gone beyond tolerable limits and is threatening the very social fabric of the Kingdom," Mr. Al Shoala told DT.

He said that the Committee for Follow-up and Coordination will be headed by Mr. Jawad Habib with Mr. Khalid Zayani, Elham Hassan and Ibrahim Amir as its members.

The Drafting Committee will be

chaired by Dr. Abdullah Al Hawaj, renowned lawyer Ahmad Abdullah Shamlan, Mr. Fouad Shehab, Mr. Baqer Al Najjar and Dr. Shawki Al Dallal.

The Committee for Programmes will be headed by Dr. Khalid Abdullah and its members include Ms. Afnan Al Zayani, Dr. Ibtisam Al Dallal, Mr. Jawad Al Hawaj, Dr. Waleed Zubari and Mr. Kazim Saeed and Ubaydli Obaidli.

Mr. Al Shoala explained that sectarian rifts are slowly creeping into the minds of younger generations and this is a cause of concern for everybody.

"There is an urgent need to address this issue. We feel that national unity is our most valuable asset which should be protected and cherished at any cost. The nature and culture of any Bahraini is tolerance and this tradition should continue for generations to come," he said.

Programmes are now being finalised for implementation. "The first step is to communicate with the wise leadership of the

Kingdom and our desire is to implement the decisions taken by Bahrain's leaders," he said.

He added that although their effort has nothing to do with the national dialogue initiated by Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, they hope that it would expedite the process.

"National unity is important and eradicating the very thought of sectarianism from the people's minds is our top priority as we do not want our children and grandchildren to be dragged into this controversy," he said.

The Committee on Programmes has finalised some projects, like the 'One Nation One Blood' initiative which encourages citizens to participate in blood donation campaigns.

It is also utilising social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook. "We will utilise the media to the hilt to spread the message of peace and harmony," he added.