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Saudi Arabia, Bahrain Poised to Announce ‘Union’

By [Jason Ditz](#)

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According to Bahraini Information Minister Samira Rajab, [the unrest-torn island nation is planning to announce a formal union with Saudi Arabia on Monday](#), uniting the nations' economic, security and foreign relations interests.



Rajab insisted that Bahrain would retain its UN membership in spite of the union, and while insisting that the nation would also keep its “sovereignty,” the announcement appears by all accounts to be a de facto vassalization, keeping the al-Khalifa dynasty in power in Bahrain name only.

[Bahrain’s Prime Minister and Army Chief have already endorsed the move](#), and Foreign Minister al-Khalifa downplayed the effect of the deal, saying Bahrain was virtually “joined at the hip” with the Saudis as it was.

Bahraini officials see the “union” as a way to justify further crackdowns against the island’s Shi’ite majority. The Saudi military invaded Bahrain last year to crush Shi’ite protests demanding free elections.

The announcement will be made at a Gulf Cooperation Consortium (GCC) meeting, and Bahraini officials have floated rumors that a third, unnamed nation would be joining the union.