

## Shias continue protests in Bahrain

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Bahrain has been hit by rioting in majority Shia areas for a fifth consecutive day in demonstrations that have seen the death of one protester, local press reports said yesterday.

Security forces have fired teargas and rubber bullets in Shia villages during trouble that erupted following the death on Monday of a young protester who died after a demonstration organised by the opposition, they said.

The 22-year-old man died in hospital after being taken ill at his home after the protest at Jid Hafs, during which he inhaled teargas, an opposition activist said on condition of anonymity.

Security sources cited by the official Bahrain News Agency said the man had died of natural causes, and that an investigation had been launched into his death.

The Al Wasat newspaper yesterday reported a statement by the independent Bahrain Human Rights Association that security forces had made 39 arrests and around a dozen people had been injured during the demonstrations.

Monday's protest was staged by Shias - the majority in the small Sunni Muslim - ruled Gulf monarchy - reportedly demanding compensation for what they said were victims of human rights violations between 1980 and 1990.

Al Ayyam daily said that the number of arrests "does not exceed 20 people." It quoted an interior ministry official as saying those detained were accused of "setting fire to a police car and stealing weapons in the Jid Hafs area."

The Haq, or Movement of Liberties and Democracy, said in a statement yesterday that the security forces continued arresting young Bahrainis yesterday morning in several Shia villages west of the capital Manama.

Al Wasat printed a statement by the main Shia movement in the Gulf archipelago, the Islamic National Accord Association (INAA), in which it called on the interior ministry to "stop these illegal and inhuman actions... and free the detainees immediately."