

9 October 2014

Bahrain: Free Nabeel Rajab Immediately and Unconditionally



The undersigned more than 100 organisations call for the immediate, unconditional release of detained human rights defender **Nabeel Rajab**, arrested on 1 October 2014 in Bahrain.

Nabeel Rajab, the President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), Director of the Gulf Center for Human Rights (GCHR) and Deputy Secretary General of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), was summoned on 1 October 2014 to attend an investigation at the Criminal Investigation Directorate, specifically the General Directorate of Anti-corruption and Economic and Electronic Security. The investigation session lasted about 45 minutes and focused on two tweets that the authorities claim have offended the Ministry of Interior.

One tweet, from 28 September 2014, said: “many #Bahrain men who joined #terrorism & #ISIS have come from the security institutions and those institutions were the first ideological incubator.”

Rajab was detained until the following day when the public prosecution ordered his detention be extended for seven days pending investigation. On 9 October, no hearing took place and his case was instead transferred to the Lower Criminal Court for a hearing on 19 October, thus extending his detention a further ten days. It should be noted that he is no longer under pre-trial detention as he has now been charged. In addition, a new complaint was filed by the Bahraini Defense Forces in relation to the same tweet about ISIS. The BDF claims it was insulting to both security and military institutions of Bahrain.

It's feared that the government of Bahrain may try to imprison Rajab for a long time. Under Article 216 of the Bahraini Penal Code, this crime is punishable with up to three years in prison. Article 216 provides that: "A person shall be liable for imprisonment or payment of a fine if he offends by any method of expression the National Assembly, or other constitutional institutions, the army, law courts, authorities or government agencies."

Rajab was imprisoned several times in the past few years. On 9 July 2012, the 5th Lower Criminal Court sentenced him to three months in prison, in a case that is linked to six tweets he posted on 2 June 2012. He had served almost the full sentence before that conviction was overturned on 23 August 2012. However, on 16 August 2012, the Lower Criminal Court also sentenced Rajab to three years' imprisonment for "participation in illegal gatherings and calling for a march without prior notification." That sentence was reduced on 11 December 2012 to two years, and he was released on 24 May 2014.

During his previous imprisonment, Rajab has been subject to [discrimination and ill-treatment in prison](#), including being placed in solitary confinement with a dead animal, being isolated from other political detainees for his entire detention period and [being prevented from contacting his family](#) on occasion, including after he reported violations that he had witnessed in prison. He was not permitted to see his family on the Eid this past week.

The undersigned organisations consider the detention of Rajab since 1 October to be a clear act of discrimination. Last month, [another citizen](#) was accused of a crime under the same article of the law, "offending the army"; however while that person was released within 24 hours, Rajab was denied release, presumably due to his reputation as a well-known human rights defender with a lot of influence on twitter, both locally and internationally.

We believe strongly that Nabeel Rajab has been targeted solely due to his peaceful and legitimate human rights work and in particular his recent successful missions to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and the European Union in Brussels. He is being detained for merely exercising his rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, as guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The undersigned over 100 organisations call for:

1. The immediate and unconditional release of Nabeel Rajab and all other human rights defenders who have been detained in Bahrain solely as a result of their legitimate human rights work;
2. The Bahrain authorities to take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Nabeel Rajab;
3. The Bahrain authorities to guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Bahrain are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

We further urge the UN, US administration, the UK government, as well as other governments that have influence in Bahrain, the EU and leading human rights organizations to put real pressure on the government of Bahrain in order to immediately stop the judicial harassment of human rights defenders; drop all charges against them and release all detained human rights defenders and political prisoners, including Nabeel Rajab, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, founder of BCHR and GCHR, and Naji Fateel of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights.

Signed,

1. Activist Organization For Development And Human Rights, Yemen
2. Agencia EFE, Spain
3. Albadeal centre for studies and research, Jordan
4. Alkarama, Switzerland
5. All Youth Organization, Yemen
6. AMAL Human Development Network, Pakistan
7. AMAN Network for Rehabilitation and Defending Human Rights
8. Amel Association, Lebanon
9. Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB)
10. Arab Digital Expression, Egypt
11. Arab Institute For Human Rights, Lebanon
12. Arab Lawyers Union, Egypt
13. Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI)
14. Article 19, Bahrain
15. Association Dea Dia Serbia
16. Association de la Réinsertion des Prisonniers et le Suivi des Conditions des Prisons, Tunisia
17. Association Tunisienne de Defense des Droits de L'Enfant, Tunisia
18. Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) Network
19. Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR)
20. Bahrain Human Rights Society
21. Bahrain Human Rights Observatory (BHRO)
22. Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)
23. Bahrain Interfaith
24. Bahrain Rehabilitation & Anti Violence Organisation (BRAVO)
25. Bahrain Salam for Human Rights
26. Bahrain Transparency
27. Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights
28. BRAC, Bangladesh
29. Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE)
30. CARAM-Asia, Malaysia
31. Caritas Migrant Center, Lebanon
32. Center for Transitional Justice, Tunisia
33. CIVICUS, South Africa
34. Coalition of Tunisian Women
35. Community Development Services (CDS), Sri Lanka
36. Defending Justice and Rights, USA
37. Dewany Civil Office of Ombudsman, USA
38. Egyptian Organization For Human Rights (EOHR)
39. English PEN

40. European Saudi Organizations for Human Rights, Germany
41. European-Bahraini Organisation for Human Rights (EBOHR)
42. Filastiniyat, Palestine
43. Fondation Chokri Belaid Contre la Violence, Tunisia
44. Forum des Alternatives Maroc, Morocco
45. Fraternity Center for Democracy and Civil Society
46. Freedom House
47. Front Line Defenders
48. Gesr Center for Development (GESR)
49. Gulf Center for Human Rights (GCHR)
50. Human Right Information And Training Centre, Yemen
51. Human Rights and the Ahwazi Arabs, UK
52. Human Rights Information And Training Centre, Lebanon
53. Humanitarian Rights Center, Yemen
54. Independent Commission for Citizens Rights, Palestine
55. Index on Censorship
56. International Awareness Youth Club, Egypt
57. International centre for supporting rights and freedom, Egypt
58. International Civil Society Network
59. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
60. International Media Support (IMS), Denmark
61. International Press Institute (IPI)
62. International Service for Human Rights
63. INTERSOS, Italy
64. Islamic Non Violence Organization, USA
65. Jordanian Commission for Democratic Culture
66. Justice for Iran (JFI),UK
67. Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, Lebanon
68. Kuwait Institute For Human Rights
69. Kuwait Society For Human Rights
70. Lawyer's Rights Watch Canada (LRWC)
71. Ligue algerienne pour la defense des droits de l'homme (LADDH), Algeria
72. Ligue Tunisienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LTDH), section Sfax sud, Tunisia
73. Lualua centre for human rights (LCHR), Lebanon
74. Maharat Foundation, Lebanon
75. Martin Ennals Award, Switzerland
76. MENA monitoring group, Tunisia
77. Monitoring of Human Rights in Saudi Arabia
78. Network of Algerian Human Rights Lawyers
79. New Bakkah Foundation, Switzerland
80. Nidal Tagheer Organization for Defending Rights, Yemen
81. No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ), Italy
82. Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty (NRPTT), Italy
83. Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), Norway
84. Organisation marocaine des droits humains, Morocco
85. Palestinian Institute for Human Rights
86. Peace Mission of the International Council for Human Rights, Yemen
87. PEN International
88. Rafto Foundation, Norway
89. Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), France
90. Réseau des avocats algérien pour défendre les droits de l'homme, Algeria
91. RO'YA Association for a Better Syria, France
92. Shia Rights Watch, USA
93. Sudanese Development Initiative (SUDIA)
94. Syrian Center for Democracy and Civil Rights

95. Syrian Nonviolence Movement
96. Tunisian Initiative for Freedom of Expression
97. Tunisian National Council for Liberties (CNLT)
98. Un ponte per, Italy
99. Vivarta
100. Volunteers Without borders, Lebanon
101. Women Research and Training Centre
102. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
103. Youth for Humanity, Egypt
104. Youth Transparency & Building, Yemen

And the family of Nabeel Rajab:

Sumaya, Adam and Malek Rajab