

URGENT ACTION

CONVICTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST UPHeld

The conviction against Bahraini human rights activist, Nabeel Rajab, was upheld on 11 December. However his three-year prison sentence was reduced to two years.

On 11 December the Court of Appeal in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, upheld the guilty verdict against **Nabeel Rajab**, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights and Director of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights. However his prison sentence was reduced from three years down to two. He was convicted of “illegal gathering” and “disturbing public order”, “calling for and taking part in demonstrations” in Manama “without prior notification”, on 12 January, in February and on 31 March 2012.

His lawyers will lodge an appeal before the Court of Cassation, although it is not clear how long the process might last. Nabeel Rajab has already served six months in prison.

Nabeel Rajab’s family and friends were present in court and told Amnesty International that he was shocked. He had not expected such a harsh sentence. Representatives of international organizations and embassies also attended the court.

In the same ruling the Court of Appeal also acquitted Nabeel Rajab in the case of “insulting a national institution”. In June a Lower Criminal Court had converted a bail payment of 300 Bahraini Dinars (around US\$800) to a fine, which he appealed.

Nabeel Rajab has been in al-Jaw prison since his conviction by a lower court on 16 August.

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Urging the Bahraini authorities to release Nabeel Rajab immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urging them to quash the convictions and sentence against Nabeel Rajab;
- Urging them to protect him from torture or other ill-treatment and to order an investigation into reports that Nabeel Rajab has been ill-treated in detention, and bring anyone found responsible for abuses to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 JANUARY 2013 TO:

King

Shaikh Hamad bin 'Issa Al Khalifa
Office of His Majesty the King
P.O. Box 555
Rifa'a Palace, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1766 4587 (keep trying)
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Interior

Shaikh Rashid bin 'Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ministry of Interior
P.O. Box 13, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1723 2661
Twitter: @moi_Bahrain
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs
Shaikh Khalid bin Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the ninth update of UA 128/12. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/059/2012/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

CONVICTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST UPHELD

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nabeel Rajab has been harassed on several occasions. On 6 February riot police reportedly punched him several times in the face, head and back while he was leading a demonstration. Nabeel Rajab was arrested on 5 May at Manama airport as he travelled back to the country after attending a conference in Lebanon where he had been attending a human rights workshop. He was charged with “insulting a national institution” (the Ministry of Interior) in his tweets. He was released on bail on 27 June and re-arrested on 9 July after being sentenced to three months in prison for comments he made on Twitter about the Prime Minister’s visit to an area of Bahrain. On 16 August he was sentenced to three years in prison for calling for and participating in “illegal gatherings” and “disturbing public order” between February and March 2012. Only he and his wife were present during the hearing and his lawyers were not present when the verdict was announced.

On 23 August he was acquitted of the libel case, after he had already served his three-month sentence. During the hearing he told the court he had been subjected to ill-treatment and described his poor prison conditions. He also told the court that following a phone call from his wife, in which he had told her of the bad prison conditions, he was put in a smaller, dark cell in solitary confinement for one day. An Amnesty International trial observer, who attended Nabeel Rajab’s hearing on 10 September, said that Nabeel Rajab had also told the court on that day about his ill-treatment. Nabeel Rajab described that after his three-year sentence he was placed alone in a very small and dark room for a full day, where there was a dead animal. He later said that he was almost naked, with only a small piece of cloth covering his genitals.

The human rights situation in Bahrain has markedly deteriorated over recent months, with repressive practices increasingly entrenched and government disregard for the recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) becoming more flagrant. The BICI was set up to investigate widespread human rights violations during the 2011 uprising. The blanket ban on all protests (issued in late October 2012) and the increasing harassment and arrest of human rights activists, has meant hope for an improved human rights situation in Bahrain is fading.

The BICI, appointed by Royal Order on 29 June 2011 included five renowned international legal and human rights experts, charged with investigating and reporting on human rights violations committed in connection to the 2011 protests. At the launch of the BICI report in November 2011, the government publicly committed itself to implementing the recommendations set out in the report. The report recounted the government’s response to the mass protests and documented wide-ranging human rights abuses. Among its key recommendations, the report called on the government to bring to account those responsible for human rights violations, including torture and excessive use of force, and to carry out independent investigations into allegations of torture.

Later, during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) sessions held in May and September 2012 before the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, the government of Bahrain tried to evade criticism almost solely by relying on the promise to abide by the BICI process. During the May session, the Bahraini delegation stated that “a great number of BICI recommendations have been completely implemented while others are currently being implemented”. During the final review in September, the government accepted more than 140 of 176 recommendations, including those calling for the release of prisoners of conscience, investigations into allegations of torture, and prosecution of those found responsible for human rights violations. For further information see: *Bahrain: Reform shelved, repression unleashed*, (MDE 11/062/2012, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/062/2012/en>).

Name: Nabeel Rajab
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 128/12 Index: MDE 11/068/2012 Issue date: 12 December 2012