

URGENT ACTION

NABEEL RAJAB RELEASED, BUT FACES CHARGES

Bahraini human rights defender Nabeel Rajab has been released on medical grounds. He is still facing separate charges, for which he could face up to 10 years in prison.

Nabeel Rajab was released in the evening of 13 July, after a royal pardon was issued ordering his release for medical reasons. He was serving a six-month prison sentence for “publicly insulting official institutions” in comments he made on Twitter in 2014 that were considered offensive to the Ministries of Defence and Interior.

Nabeel Rajab is facing separate charges over comments posted on Twitter and retweeting comments on the war in Yemen and allegations of torture in Jaw prison, after a prison strike on 10 March 2015. His case is being investigated by the Public Prosecution. If the case goes to trial and he is convicted, he could face up to 10 years in prison. He has been under a travel ban since November 2014.

Provisions contained in Bahraini legislation, including Article 216 of the Penal Code, criminalize the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly and are in breach of Bahrain’s international human rights obligations.

Since he was released, Nabeel Rajab has said that he will continue with his human rights work and thanked Amnesty International for campaigning for his release.

Please write immediately in English or Arabic:

- Calling on the Bahraini authorities to drop the charges against Nabeel Rajab, as they relate solely to his peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to lift his travel ban;
- Urging them to uphold the right to freedom of expression and repeal laws that criminalize the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly including Article 216 of the Penal Code.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 SEPTEMBER 2015 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
Email: info@interior.gov.bh
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
Email:
<http://www.moj.gov.bh/en/default76a7.html?action=category&ID=159>
Twitter: @Khaled_Bin_Ali

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the seventh update of UA 249/14. Further information:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/1653/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nabeel Rajab is the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. He was sentenced to six months in prison on 20 January 2015 for “publicly insulting official institutions” under Article 216 of Bahrain’s Penal Code. His appeal was rejected on 14 May by the High Criminal Court of Appeal in the capital, Manama.

Nabeel Rajab was rearrested at his home in the village of Bani Jamra on 2 April and taken to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) where he was questioned about comments said to have been posted on Twitter or retweeted by him on the war in Yemen and incidents in Jaw prison after a prison strike on 10 March. Shortly after his arrest, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement that he had been arrested for posting a “message that could incite people and disrupt peace” and “defaming a statutory body”. He was charged under Articles 216 and 133 of Bahrain’s Penal Code and his detention was renewed several times by the Public Prosecution until 14 May, when he was ordered to serve his six-month sentence. Nabeel Rajab is still under investigation by the Public Prosecution on these charges.

Nabeel Rajab had previously served a two-year sentence in Jaw prison, for taking part in an “illegal gathering”, “disturbing public order” and “calling for and taking part in demonstrations” in the capital, Manama, “without prior notification”. He was released in May 2014.

On 9 July, the European Parliament passed a resolution on Bahrain calling for the release of Nabeel Rajab and others detained for peacefully exercising their rights.

For information on Amnesty International’s latest report on Bahrain, please see <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/1396/2015/en/>

Name: Nabeel Rajab

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 249/14 Index: MDE 11/2143/2015 Issue Date: 23 July 2015