

URGENT ACTION

DEMAND MEDICAL CARE FOR IMPRISONED ACTIVIST

Prominent Bahraini human rights activist and prisoner of conscience Nabeel Rajab is not receiving adequate medical care in detention for severe back pain.

Nabeel Rajab has not been receiving adequate medical care for a herniated disc in his back from which he has been suffering for several years. He had been receiving physiotherapy treatment but has not been able to access it since his arrest in July 2012. He says his condition has deteriorated partly as a result of ill-treatment he was subjected to in detention. On 18 April he was in such pain that he was unable to walk to the prison's phone booth to make his weekly call to his wife. On 20 April he did manage to call her and told her of his severe pain. The prison authorities have only granted visits to the prison clinic, where Nabeel Rajab is given painkillers and advised to exercise. Nabeel Rajab is held in Jaw Prison, around 30km south of the capital Manama.

Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), was sentenced on 16 August 2012 to three years in prison for participating in "illegal gatherings with the intention of disturbing public security" and calling for and participating in marches without prior notification between January and March 2012. His sentence was reduced to two years in prison on appeal on 11 December 2012.

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

- Calling on 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, in the meantime, to ensure that Nabeel Rajab has immediate access to proper medical evaluation and appropriate treatment for his condition;
- 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 4 JUNE 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
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 Al Khalifa
Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs
P. O. Box 450, al-Manama,
Bahrain
Fax: +973 1753 1284
Email via website:
<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 check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the tenth update of UA 128/12. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/068/2012/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, has been subjected to arrest, detention and others forms of harassment on several occasions. On 6 February 2012 riot police reportedly punched him several times in the face, head and back while he was leading a demonstration. He 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 his 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. For further information see: *Bahrain: “Freedom has a price”: Two years after Bahrain’s uprising* (Index: MDE 11/005/2013, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/005/2013/en>).

The Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), appointed by Royal Order on 29 June 2011, was charged with investigating and reporting on human rights violations committed in connection with 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 carry out independent investigations into allegations of torture. However, many of the government’s pledges remain unfulfilled. The establishment of BICI and its report was considered to be a groundbreaking initiative, but, more than a year on, the promise of meaningful reform has been betrayed by the government’s unwillingness to implement key recommendations around accountability; this includes its failure to carry out independent, effective and transparent investigations into allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and excessive use of force, and to prosecute all those who gave the orders to commit human rights abuses. For further information see: *Bahrain: Reform shelved, repression unleashed* (Index: MDE 11/062/2012, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE11/062/2012/en>).

In 2012, the Bahraini government accepted numerous recommendations made by the Universal Periodic Review, a process by which a country’s human rights record is reviewed by fellow UN member states. Among them were recommendations calling on the government to abandon restrictions on human rights defenders and to release people detained solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. Since then, however, human rights defenders and other activists in Bahrain have continued to be harassed, arrested and even imprisoned for their human rights activities. In recent months, not only have prisoners of conscience not been released, but more people have been jailed simply for expressing their views, whether via Twitter or on peaceful marches.

Name: Nabeel Rajab
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 128/12 Index: MDE 11/012/2013 Issue Date: 23 April 2013