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## **'Dark day for justice' in Bahrain as activist receives three-year prison sentence**

Nabeel Rajab, the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, was today sentenced to three years in prison after being found guilty of taking part in an “illegal gathering” among other charges in relation to a protest in the capital Manama on 6 February 2012.

Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Deputy Middle East and North Africa Programme Director at Amnesty International, said:

"The court's decision is a dark day for justice in Bahrain that further questions the independence of the judiciary."

"Like many others in Bahrain, Nabeel Rajab is a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and assembly. He should be released immediately and his convictions and sentences quashed. The authorities must also act to ensure that all human rights defenders are able to carry out their work without fear of reprisal."

"If anything, this latest verdict marks the end of the facade of reform in Bahrain. The international community can no longer be under the illusion that Bahrain is on the path of reform when confronted with such blatant ruthless tactics of suppressing dissenting voices. Bahrain's international partners need to make this loud and clear to the Bahraini authorities"

Rajab's wife Sumaya, who was with him at the reading of the verdict told Amnesty International:

"The sentence, although harsh and unfair, comes as no surprise to Nabeel and I. It shows how biased and corrupt the judiciary in Bahrain is. There are no human rights in Bahrain. As the defence team said, this sentence is the biggest scandal in the history of Bahrain judiciary."

Nabeel Rajab was one of the organizers of the anti-government protests which started in February 2011.

Rajab was arrested on 6 June following complaints about a message he posted on the social media site Twitter, which led to him being charged with libel. Following a court hearing on 9 July, he was jailed for three months.

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