

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/bahrein-free-nabeel-rajab-immediately-and-10-10-2014,47083.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Bahrain

Appeal : Free Nabeel Rajab

Free Nabeel Rajab Immediately and Unconditionally

10 October 2014

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