

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER CHARGED AND DETAINED

**Bahraini human rights defender and prisoner of conscience, Nabeel Rajab, was arrested on 13 June. He has been charged with “spreading false information and rumours in the aim of discrediting the State”. The Prosecution ordered his detention for seven days pending investigation.**

**Nabeel Rajab** was arrested at home in the village of Bani Jamra, west of the capital Manama, on 13 June by 15 policemen in civilian clothing after the neighbourhood was surrounded by riot police at about 5am. They showed him a warrant to search his house, for his arrest and for his transfer to the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID), without giving any reason. His phone and computer were confiscated and he was taken to the East Rifa' police station, south of Manama, from where he was allowed to call his family, and where he remains.

On 14 June Nabeel Rajab was taken to the Public Prosecution Office where he was charged, in the presence of his lawyers, with “spreading false information and rumours with the aim of discrediting the State” and ordered to be detained for seven days pending investigation. When his family visited him at about 9pm, he told them he was being held in solitary confinement, unlike other detainees in the station who share cells.

Nabeel Rajab is facing separate charges and is being investigated by the Public Prosecution for comments and re-tweets posted on Twitter related to the war in Yemen and also to allegations of torture in Jaw prison after a prison riot in March 2015. If this separate 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.

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

- Calling on the Bahraini authorities to release Nabeel Rajab immediately and unconditionally and drop the charges against him, 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 28 JULY 2016 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](mailto: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:

His Excellency Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, 30 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8QB,  
Fax 020 7201 9183, Email [information@bahrainembassy.co.uk](mailto:information@bahrainembassy.co.uk) Salutation Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the eighth update of UA 249/14. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/2143/2015/en/>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nabeel Rajab is the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. He 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 20 January 2015 he was sentenced to six months in prison 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. Nabeel Rajab was arrested at his home on 2 April and taken to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) where he was questioned about comments he allegedly tweeted or retweeted about the Yemen war and incidents in Jaw prison after a prison strike on 10 March. Shortly after his arrest, the Ministry of Interior said 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. He was released in the evening of 13 July, after a royal pardon was issued for medical reasons. However, he is still under investigation by the Public Prosecution on these charges.

For more information please see Amnesty International’s April 2015 report: *Behind the rhetoric, Human rights abuses in Bahrain continue unabated* (**Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/1396/2015/en/>).

Repression is on the increase in Bahrain. On 12 June 2016 a group of five activists, including a former prisoner of conscience, were prevented from leaving Bahrain to attend the UN Human Rights Council’s 32<sup>nd</sup> session in Geneva and the main opposition party, al-Wefaq, was suspended on 14 June.

8<sup>th</sup> update on UA: 249/14 Index: MDE 11/4273/2016 Issue Date: 16 June 2016