

# URGENT ACTION

## NABEEL RAJAB'S TRIAL DATE SET FOR 12 JULY

**Prisoner of conscience Nabeel Rajab was told on 26 June that his trial will begin on 12 July on charges of “spreading false rumours in times of war” and “insulting public authorities” in relation to tweets he published in 2015. He could face up to 13 years in prison if convicted. He was hospitalised on 27 June for an irregular heartbeat.**

On 26 June Bahraini human rights defender **Nabeel Rajab** was notified that he would be facing a new trial before the High Criminal Court on 12 July over comments posted on Twitter and retweeting comments relating to the war in Yemen and to allegations of torture in Jaw prison after a prison riot in March 2015. He is charged with “spreading false rumours in time of war” for which he could be sentenced to up to ten years in prison under Article 133 of the Bahraini Penal Code and with “offending public authorities” for which he could receive up to three years in prison under Article 216 of the Penal Code.

Nabeel Rajab had previously been arrested in relation to these tweets in April 2015. He was re-arrested on 13 June 2016 and was charged the next day with “spreading false information and rumours with the aim of discrediting the State”. Since his arrest he has been held in solitary confinement. On 23 June he was transferred to West Rifa’ police station.

On 27 June he was transferred by ambulance to the Coronary Care Unit at the Bahrain Defense Forces Hospital after suffering from an irregular heartbeat. A day earlier he had complained to his wife that he had high blood pressure and ringing in his ears.

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

- Calling on the Bahraini authorities to release Nabeel Rajab immediately and unconditionally as he is detained solely because of the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to ensure that he receives any medical attention he requires;
- 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 9 AUGUST 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  
**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.** His Excellency Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, 30 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8QB, Tel: 0207 201 9170, Fax 020 7201 9183, Email: [information@bahrainembassy.co.uk](mailto:information@bahrainembassy.co.uk) or through the online contact form at <http://www.bahrainembassy.co.uk/> Salutation: Your Excellency

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the ninth update of UA 249/14. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/4273/2016/en/>

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nabeel Rajab is the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. He has already 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” between January and March 2012. He had been sentenced to three years in prison on 16 August 2012, which was reduced on appeal to two years in prison on 11 December 2012. 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 that year 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.

Nabeel Rajab was re-arrested at his home in the village of Bani Jamra, west of the capital Manama, on 13 June 2016 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 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. On 14 June he 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. On 21 June Nabeel Rajab’s detention was extended for another eight days and his lawyers submitted a letter to the Public Prosecution requesting that he be transferred to a detention facility that had better medical care and for him not to be held in solitary confinement.

The Bahraini authorities have intensified their crackdown on the rights to freedom of expression, association and movement. 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 32nd session in Geneva. The country’s main opposition group al-Wefaq National Islamic Society was suspended on 14 June and its spiritual leader Ayatollah Isa Qassem stripped of his nationality on 20 June.

For further information please see: *Bahrain: Authorities must halt repression after week of intensified clampdown on human rights* (AI Index: MDE 11/4312/2016, 22 June 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/4312/2016/en/>)

Further information on UA: 249/14 Index: MDE 11/4346/2016 Issue Date: 28 June 2016