

# URGENT ACTION

## NABEEL RAJAB LOSES APPEAL AGAINST SENTENCE

**Bahraini human rights defender Nabeel Rajab has had his six-month prison sentence upheld on appeal. He is a prisoner of conscience.**

**Nabeel Rajab's** appeal against a six-month prison sentence for "publicly insulting official institutions" was rejected on 14 May by the Court of Appeal in the capital, Manama, which upheld his conviction and sentence. He will serve his sentence in Jaw prison, south of Manama. His lawyers are filing an appeal before the Court of Cassation.

Nabeel Rajab was not present in court. He is in detention and facing separate charges over comments posted on Twitter and retweeting comments on the war in Yemen and torture allegations in Jaw prison after a prison strike on 10 March. He was arrested on 2 April 2015 and his detention was renewed several times by the Public Prosecution, most recently on 11 May. If convicted of these new charges, he could face up to 10 years in prison.

Nabeel Rajab had been sentenced to six months in prison on 20 January 2015 for "publicly insulting official institutions" in comments he made on Twitter in 2014 that were considered offensive to the Ministries of Defense and Interior. The tweets were posted after the armed group calling itself Islamic State released a video featuring Bahraini men, some of whom had left the Bahrain Ministry of Interior to join the armed group in Iraq and Syria.

Amnesty International has reviewed Nabeel Rajab's statements on Twitter and considers him a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

### **Please write immediately in English or Arabic:**

- Calling on the Bahraini authorities to release Nabeel Rajab immediately and unconditionally and quash his conviction, as he has been jailed solely for legitimately exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to drop the new charges against Nabeel Rajab, as they relate solely to the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- 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.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JUNE 2015 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: **011 973 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: **011 973 1723 2661**  
Email: **info@interior.gov.uk**  
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: **011 973 1753 1284**  
Email:  
**<http://www.moj.gov.bh/en/default76a7.html?action=category&ID=159>**  
Twitter: **@Khaled\_Bin\_Ali**

#### **Also send copies to:**

H.E. Ambassador Shaikh Abdullah Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Khalifa, Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain  
3502 International Dr. NW, Washington DC 20008  
Fax: **1 202 362 2192** | Email: **ambsecretary@bahrainembassy.org**

Please let us know if you took action so that we can track our impact! **EITHER** send a short email to **uan@aiusa.org** with UA 249/14 in the subject line, and include in the body of the email the number of letters and/or emails you sent, **OR** fill out this **[short online form](#)** (press Ctrl + click on link) to let us know how you took action. Thank you for taking action! Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if taking action after the appeals date. This is the sixth update of UA 249/14. Further information:  
**<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE11/1406/2015/en/>**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# URGENT ACTION

## NABEEL RAJAB LOSES APPEAL AGAINST SENTENCE

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nabeel Rajab is the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. He was summoned to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) Anti-corruption and Economic and Electronic Security Unit on 1 October 2014 for questioning about tweets from his Twitter account considered offensive to government institutions and was detained overnight. He appeared before a Public Prosecutor on 9 October, who charged him with “publicly insulting official institutions”, under Article 216 of Bahrain’s Penal Code which criminalizes offending “by any method of expression the National Assembly, or other constitutional institutions, the army, law courts, authorities or government agencies”. The Public Prosecutor ordered that Nabeel Rajab remain in detention and set the first day of his trial for 19 October.

He was released on bail on 2 November but a travel ban was imposed on him. He was sentenced on 20 January 2015 to six months in prison and his appeal started before the Court of Appeal on 11 February.

Nabeel Rajab was rearrested at his home in the village of Bani Jamra on 2 April and taken to the CID where he was questioned about comments said to have been posted on Twitter or retweeted by him on the war in Yemen and incidents in Jaw prison after a prison strike on 10 March. Shortly after his arrest, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement 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 has remained in detention since. If convicted, he could face up to 10 years in prison.

Nabeel Rajab had previously served a two-year prison sentence in Jaw prison on charges of participating in an “illegal gathering”, “disturbing public order” and “calling for and taking part in demonstrations” in Manama “without prior notification”. He was released in May 2014.

For information on Amnesty International’s latest report on Bahrain, please see <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde11/1396/2015/en/>

**Name:** Nabeel Rajab (m)

**Issues:** Prisoner of conscience, Human rights defender, Freedom of expression

**Further Information on** 249/14 (3 November 2014) **and Updates** (2 October 2014, 10 October 2014, 12 February 2015, 10 April 2015 and 6 May 2015)

**Issue Date:** 15 May 2015

**Country:** Bahrain