



European Parliament

Member of the European Parliament

Brussels, 21.06.2016

Dear HR/VP Federica Mogherini,

Nabeel Rajab, the prominent human rights defender and President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), has been arrested once again by Bahraini authorities on Monday June 13th, and has since been kept in solitary confinement. Nabeel was last released from prison in July 2015 following a European Parliament resolution on his case adopted a week earlier and has been subject to a travel ban ever since.

Nabeel has been charged with "spreading false news and rumours about the internal situation in a bid to discredit Bahrain", and an extension of his detention has been ordered pending an investigation. If convicted, he could face up to 10 years in prison.

This recent arrest coincides with a wide-spread crackdown on political dissidents, human rights defenders, and the opposition by Bahraini authorities. On June 12th, Bahraini authorities prevented a delegation of human rights activists from traveling to attend the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva while only two days later, on June 14th, the government suspended Al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, the biggest opposition party and the largest political group in the country, on charges that the organisation supported sectarianism and terrorism. Various prominent human rights defendants in Bahrain still face harassment and travel bans. In the meantime, Bahrain continues the practice of stripping opposition and human rights activists, or dissidents of the Bahraini diaspora of their citizenship, leaving many stateless.

As Members of the European Parliament deeply concerned with human rights, the rule of law, and the right to freedom of expression, we urge you to take urgent action to secure Nabeel Rajab's immediate release, the dropping of all charges against him, as well as lifting the travel ban that was previously imposed on him.

Nabeel's release must be followed with an end to the ongoing crackdown on human rights defenders, and all measures taken by the Bahraini government to stifle legitimate opposition and freedom of expression.

Many thanks,

Signed, Members of the European Parliament,

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