

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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Your Majesty

I am writing to express Amnesty International's grave concern about the detention of Nabeel Rajab, the well-known human rights defender, and the charges brought against him and urge the Bahraini authorities to uphold the right to freedom of expression and release him.

As I am sure Your Majesty knows, Nabeel Rajab was summoned to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID) on 1 October for questioning about two of his tweets issued on 28 September that were considered offensive to government institutions under Article 216 of the Bahraini Penal Code. The CID ordered Nabeel Rajab to be detained overnight. The following day, after initial questioning, the Public Prosecution ordered his detention for seven days, pending further investigation. On 9 October, he appeared before a Public Prosecutor who ordered that he remain in detention and set the first day of his trial for 19 October. The Public Prosecution Office charged Nabeel Rajab with "publicly insulting official institutions" on 9 October.

Amnesty International has reviewed Nabeel Rajab's tweets in which he commented on security institutions in Bahrain after a video was released by the armed group calling itself the Islamic State featuring Bahraini men, some of whom had left the Bahrain Ministry of Interior to join the armed group in Iraq and Syria. The organization considers that he was merely expressing an opinion and exercising his legitimate right to freedom of expression.

Nabeel Rajab is one of the most respected human rights defenders in the Middle East and North Africa region and a close friend of Amnesty International. I met him personally this year when he visited our offices in London. His continued detention and the charges levelled against him are a serious setback for Bahrain.

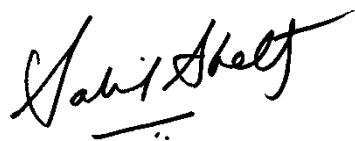
Amnesty International notes that Article 216 of Bahrain's Penal Code, under which Nabeel Rajab was charged criminalizes offending "by any method of expression the National Assembly, or other constitutional institutions, the army, law courts, authorities or government agencies". If convicted under this Article, Nabeel Rajab could face up to three years in prison.

Laws that criminalize the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, including Article 216 of the Penal Code, are in breach of Bahrain's international human rights obligations and I urge your government to repeal them.

Amnesty International considers Nabeel Rajab to be a prisoner of conscience. We are calling for his immediate and unconditional release and for the charges against him to be dropped.

I look forward to receiving Your Majesty's response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salil Shetty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Salil Shetty
Secretary General