



ECDHR-OBS Joint Statement

EU must act upon European Parliament Resolution on human rights in Bahrain

Thursday 9 July 2015 - The European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights, Front Line Defenders, and the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), welcome the European Parliament's *urgency resolution on Bahrain, particularly on the case of Nabeel Rajab*, adopted today¹. The Human Rights situation in Bahrain has continued to deteriorate and our organisations are pleased to see the European Parliament has chosen to take a united stance against such violations.

"This sends a strong and clear message to the Bahraini authorities that the European Parliament is very much concerned about the perpetration of Human Rights violations in Bahrain, and that it will not remain silent" said Husain Abdulla, Executive Director of Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain, member of the ECDHR coalition.

The European Parliament highlights the lack of progress in the implementation of meaningful reforms for the protection of Human Rights in Bahrain and it urgently calls upon its government to immediately and unconditionally release all Human Rights Defenders and political prisoners and to abide by its Human Rights commitments under international law.

Nabeel Rajab, like many other Human Rights Defenders in Bahrain, has suffered oppression and ill-treatment from the Bahraini authorities due to his activities. A climate of repression against peaceful dissent reigns in Bahrain since the 2011 protests, in a country where freedom of expression and thought and of gathering are criminalised. In particular, [Human Rights Defenders face continuous judicial harassment and arbitrary detention. Some of them have been exposed to severe torture.](#)

As the resolution points out "*the Bahrain authorities has been intensifying the use of repressive measures against civil society activists and peaceful opposition*". In the past seven months, the government has revoked the citizenship of 128 people, including 9 minors, rendering most of them stateless, due to their peaceful opposition against the regime which is in blatant violation of international law. Also, the use of death penalty has dramatically increased in Bahrain, with four individuals being sentenced to death only in 2015, pointing towards a very worrying trend on the use of death sentences.

"It is encouraging to see that the European Parliament is denouncing Human Rights abuses in Bahrain. This resolution should be the first step for the European Union as a whole to put human rights at the centre of its diplomatic relations with Bahrain", declared Karim Lahidji, FIDH President. "We urge the EU High Representative, and EU Member States to collectively and publicly insist that

1 European Parliament resolution of 9 July 2015 on Bahrain, in particular the case of Nabeel Rajab (2015/2758(RSP)), <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2015-0279+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

Bahrain release those currently detained and imprisoned for peacefully exercising their rights, such as Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja and Ghada Jamsheer”, said Mary Lawlor, Executive Director of Front Line Defenders.

ECDHR, Front Line Defenders and the Observatory join the call made by the European Parliament for “a rapid collective EU effort to develop a comprehensive strategy on how the EU and the Commission can actively push for the release of the imprisoned activists and prisoners of conscience”.

The Resolution also urges the European Union to properly implement its guidelines on human rights defenders and torture and to ban exports of tear gas and crowd control equipment until investigations are conducted regarding their improper use and until the perpetrators of such improper use are held accountable. ECDHR, Frontline Defenders and the Observatory demand that the EU acts diligently upon these key recommendations and in addition that it undertake an evaluation of support offered to the Bahrain police and justice sectors.

“We urge the government of Bahrain to immediately and unconditionally release all Human Rights Defenders and political activists imprisoned and to abide by its obligations under the United Nations Human Rights Charter and the United Nations Convention Against Torture, along with its other commitments under international and humanitarian law”, concluded OMCT Secretary General, Gerald Staberock.

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