



Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Human Rights
The Chair

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Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah al-Khalifa
Minister of Interior
Ministry of Interior
P.O Box 13, Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain

Dear Minister,

We have been informed by credible sources about the detention of the President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR) and the Deputy Secretary General of the International Federation on Human Rights Organisations (FIDH), Mr Nabeel Rajab, yesterday, and his interrogation by the Public Prosecution this morning.

I wish to express my grave concern and astonishment about the arrest of Mr Rajab, who is one of the most respected human rights defenders in the region.

As you are aware, the European Parliament closely follows the human rights situation in Bahrain, and is engaged in a long term dialogue with Bahrain. We were relieved to see Mr Rajab released earlier this year and considered this a very positive sign with regard to the improvement in the working environment of human rights defenders. It also raised hopes about the reconciliation of the political tensions in Bahrain.

The reports about the new arrest of Mr Rajab seem to indicate that the Bahraini authorities continue to use judicial harassment to prevent human rights defenders from carrying out their legitimate activities, despite the pledges made by the Kingdom of Bahrain in the framework of the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry as well as of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review.

I therefore respectfully urge you to make full use of your prerogatives to ensure that Mr Nabeel Rajab is immediately released and to put an end to any act of harassment, including at the judicial level, against him and against all human rights defenders in Bahrain, in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Bahrain.

Yours sincerely,

Elena Valenciano