



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

www.ohchr.org • TEL: +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: registry@ohchr.org

REFERENCE: CAT/letter on reprisals/Bahrain

Geneva, 13 May 2015

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as rapporteur on reprisals against those who provide information to the Committee in relation to periodic reports submitted under article 19 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of Your Excellency's Government to information received regarding the arrest of Mr. Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights (BCHR), Deputy Secretary General of the International Federation for Human Rights and member of the Advisory Board of Human Rights Watch. In this regard, BCHR submitted, together with two other organizations, an alternative report to the Committee in February 2015, prior to the adoption of the list of issues prior to the submission of the second periodic report of Bahrain during the 54th session, held in Geneva from 20 April to 15 May 2015. The Committee's concluding observations on the initial report of Bahrain, issued on 20 May 2005, expressed concern, *inter alia*, about information received regarding limits on human rights non-governmental organizations to conduct their work, in particular regarding activities relevant to the Convention, within the country and abroad.

The Committee has received the following information:

- On 2 April 2015, between 10 and 20 police jeeps allegedly surrounded the home of Mr. Rajab in Bani Jamra village and asked him to step outside. When Mr. Rajab came out, he was reportedly shown a summons issued by the General Directorate of Anti-corruption and Economic and Electronic Security which is under the Ministry of the Interior. Mr. Rajab and his family were allegedly not given a copy of the summons. Mr. Rajab's family was reportedly told that he would be taken to the General Directorate of Criminal Investigations (CID).

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His Excellency Mr. Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain
Avenue Louis-Casaï 84 (1st Floor)
1216 Cointrin
Email: info@bahrain-mission.ch



- It has been reported that since his arrest on 2 April 2015 Mr. Rajab has been held in solitary confinement at the Isa Town Detention Centre.
- On 3 April 2015, it was reported that government security forces raided Mr. Rajab's home and confiscated all electronic equipment.
- After the arrest of Mr. Rajab, it is reported that the Ministry of the Interior published a statement saying that the Director of the General Directorate of Anti-corruption and Economic and Electronic Security announced that Nabeel Rajab had been captured, after the necessary legal procedures were satisfied, after publishing information that would harm civil peace and insulting a statutory body, in violation of the law.
- It is alleged that the Government of Bahrain subsequently announced that Mr. Rajab would be charged with publicly defaming a statutory body and spreading rumours during wartime, which may entail a sentence of up to ten years of imprisonment in case of conviction.
- It is reported further that on 11 May 2015 the High Court of Bahrain extended Mr. Rajab's detention for an additional 15 days.

I am concerned that in accordance with the information received, the arrest and detention of Mr. Rajab may be related to the peaceful activities of Mr. Rajab and BCHR in monitoring and documenting issues relating to the Convention in Bahrain and, in particular, with BCHR's recent cooperation with the Committee during the examination of the list of issues prior to the submission of the second periodic report of Bahrain during its 54th session in May 2015.

In regard to these allegations, I would like to refer to Your Excellency's Government to Article 13 of the Convention against Torture, which states, *inter alia*:

Article 13: "Steps shall be taken to ensure that the complainant and witnesses are protected against all ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of his complaint or any evidence given".

In view of the above-mentioned allegations, I would appreciate, as a matter of urgency, to receive information on the measures taken by Your Excellency's Government to implement, especially with regard to Mr. Rajab, article 13 of the Convention.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

George Tugushi
Rapporteur on reprisals under
article 19 of the Convention
Vice-Chair of the Committee against Torture