



The global network  
DEFENDING AND PROMOTING  
FREE EXPRESSION

21 May 2014

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**RE: IFEX calls on Bahraini authorities to honor 24 May 2014 as Bahraini human rights defender Nabeel Rajab's release date**

Your Excellencies,

IFEX, the global network for free expression comprised of 88 members in 60 countries worldwide asks you to ensure that Nabeel Rajab is released from prison at the end of his sentence on 24 May 2014 as planned. Rajab is the President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights (BCHR), an IFEX member, and has been imprisoned on charges of inciting terrorism since 2012.

We firmly believe that honouring this release date would be an opportunity for the Bahraini government to demonstrate to the world a compliance with domestic and international human rights legislation.

The IFEX network believes Rajab has been unjustly imprisoned since 9 July 2012 for simply exercising his legitimate right to freedom of expression and assembly – which the government of Bahrain criminalises and labels as “illegal gatherings.” In December 2012, a three-year sentence for “participation in illegal gatherings and calling for a march without prior notification” was reduced to two years by an appellate court in what we believe was an unfair hearing that did not uphold basic legal standards for fair trial.

We do not believe that Rajab is a "threat to public security," in fact; we believe that he has proven the contrary and can help promote peace and national unity.

Rajab is known for his peaceful views and has been honoured with a number of awards, including from other IFEX members. He is well-known worldwide and has connections with many prestigious human rights groups. In addition to being President of BCHR, Rajab is Secretary-General of the Gulf Center for Human Rights (GCHR), is on the MENA Advisory Board of Human Rights Watch and is Deputy Secretary-General of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH).

We are also particularly concerned about the ongoing targeting of human rights defenders, journalists and bloggers, in Bahrain including past and current representatives of BCHR, one of the most respected, independent human rights organisations in the country.

We ask you to please free Nabeel Rajab to his friends and family on 24 May, as is his due, and implement the lawful release of other [human rights defenders, journalists and bloggers](#) unjustly jailed for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly and who should all be released.

Thank you in advance for your attention.

Sincerely,

Annie Game  
IFEX Executive Director