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Ms Ana Gomes, MEP  
European Parliament  
Brussels

*Dear Ana,*

I would like to thank you for your letter of 1 February, wherein you provided further information on the deteriorating health condition of Nabeel Rajab, the prominent human rights defender from the Kingdom of Bahrain, and on the human rights situation in this country.

The EEAS continues to closely follow Mr Rajab's case, as well as the overall human rights situation in the country from Headquarters and via the EU Delegation in Riyadh (which is also accredited to Bahrain), in close cooperation with EU Member States represented in Manama.

I have raised the case of Rajab publicly several times already, marking the different steps in what we consider unfair judicial procedures. Most recently, on 21 February, via a statement by the Spokesperson following the sentencing of Mr Rajab by Bahrain's High Criminal Court to five additional years in prison for comments posted on social media. Mr. Rajab's case has become emblematic of our calls for the respect of freedom of expression. We have reiterated systematically our request to grant Mr Rahab's release, including on humanitarian grounds in view of his deteriorating health conditions.

Furthermore, in the statement delivered under item 4 at the Human Rights Council meeting on 14 March in Geneva, the EU reiterated its call to Bahrain to maintain its commitments as to the respect of freedom of speech and human rights defenders.

Human rights in general continue to feature prominently in discussions at all levels with Bahrain. The next meeting of the informal EU-Bahrain Human Rights Working Group in the coming months will be an opportunity to raise again this particular case which the EU will continue to follow closely.

The EU remains supportive of Bahrain's long term stability through reforms and inclusive reconciliation, which can only be sustained in an environment where peaceful political grievances can be expressed freely. To this extent we have consistently encouraged all parties in Bahrain to contribute to resume dialogue with a view to relaunch a process of national reconciliation in a peaceful and constructive manner.

Yours sincerely,



Federica Mogherini