

Brussels, 08 JUN 2018
A(2018)2206629-2490457

Ms Ana Gomez MEP
European Parliament
Brussels

Dear Ana,

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

This case, as well as the overall human rights situation in the country, are monitored closely by the European External Action Service both from Headquarters and through the EU Delegation in Riyadh (which is also accredited to Bahrain), in close cooperation with EU Member States represented in Manama.

I have expressed my concern publicly on this case on several occasions, marking the different steps in what we consider unfair judicial procedures. Most recently, on 21 February, via a statement following the sentencing of Mr Rajab to five additional years in prison by Bahrain's High Criminal Court 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 also systematically reiterated our request to grant Mr Rajab's release, including on humanitarian grounds in view of his deteriorating health.

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. The EU raised this particular case again with the Bahraini authorities at the informal EU-Bahrain Human Rights dialogue on 15 May 2018 in Manama, and it will continue to follow the matter closely.

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 once again raise 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 genuine 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