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Ms. Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President
of the European Commission

Brussels, 28 November 2017

Dear Federica,

The Bahraini High Criminal Court of Appeals upheld on 22 November the two-year jail sentence against Nabeel Rajab, co-founder and President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. Mr. Rajab is a leading figure in the protests that started in 2011 during the Arab Spring and has been accused of speaking out against Bahrain's extremely poor human rights record, namely its ban on journalists and human rights workers. He has been in detention since 13 June 2016 and has received humiliating treatment.

Mr. Rajab was convicted of "spreading false information and malicious rumours about domestic matters with the aim of discrediting the State" of Bahrain. He is also facing a further 15 years in prison regarding tweets in which he allegedly denounced various human rights violations in the country. There is no proof that he sent those tweets. His next hearing will be held on 31 December 2017.

According to the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, on 25 October 2017, Nabeel Rajab was transferred to Jau Prison; upon arrival, prison authorities immediately singled him out, confiscating his books, toiletries and clothes, and raiding his cell at night. He is also forced to share a three-by-three metre cell with five inmates. Mr. Rajab is 53 years-old and suffers from poor health conditions, which have only deteriorated since his imprisonment.

I urge you and the EEAS Delegation to Bahrain to engage with the Bahraini authorities regarding Nabeel Rajab's case, in order to ensure that all forms of ill-treatment and harassment are put to rest and that Mr. Rajab is treated with dignity; to unequivocally condemn all such cases of abuses and maltreatment of activists, protesters and journalists alike; and to ensure, above all, that, when accused, the Bahraini state provides them with a fair trial.

Best regards
Ana Gomes

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Member of the European Parliament

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