



Bahraini activist severely beaten at protest, human rights group says

By the CNN Wire Staff

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Nabeel Rajab, left, shown in 2006, has often complained about the use of violence and torture against pro-democracy protesters.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

NEW: An 18-year-old activist is allegedly tortured in detention, rights groups say

Another activist, Nabeel Rajab, is released from the hospital

He was treated for head, back, chest injuries, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights says

The outspoken activist has often complained about forces' use of violence against protesters

(CNN) -- A prominent Bahraini activist was severely beaten by security forces at a protest Friday, according to the human rights group that he leads.

Nabeel Rajab was hospitalized and later released, with injuries to his head, back and chest, according to the website of his group, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights.

A protester, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Rajab has trouble standing now.

"He is able to talk and walk, with some difficulty because he has some pain in his back," the protester said. "After the police realized he was Nabeel Rajab it was completely different treatment afterward. They took him to hospital. He heard that the leader of the group asked them to stop beating him when they realized he was Nabeel Rajab."

The activist's supporters had gathered to wait for his return at his home in the town of Bani Jamra. They were attacked by security forces, firing tear gas, Maryam Khawaja, head of foreign relations for the center, told CNN, citing witnesses.

Some protesters ran away; others ran into the house. No one was injured, according to the protester who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

"Rajab is being treated for injuries at Salmaniya hospital, along with activist Said Yousif of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, who was

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hit in the leg with a stun grenade," activist Zainab Alkhawaja said before Rajab's release from the hospital.

CNN was not immediately able to reach Bahraini officials at the president's office for comment.

In May, Rajab's house was tear-gassed as he and his family slept, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights said. That followed a similar attack in April.

Human Rights Watch said then that it knew of no entity other than Bahrain's security forces that would have access to the kind of grenades used in the April attack.

"This has been a fear for some time. Many were fearing (for) the safety of Nabeel," said Jasim Husain, an Al Wefaq party member and a former member of Bahrain's lower house.

"At least we know he is safe and recovering," Husain said before word of Rajab's release from the hospital. "The authorities need to explain."

The outspoken activist has often appeared on CNN, complaining about the use of violence and torture against pro-democracy protesters at the hands of Bahraini security forces.

Rajab was presented with the Ion Ratiu Democracy Award by the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington in November.

Husain described Rajab as one of the most famous figures in the country, who pushes for change through peaceful means.

Another activist, 18, remained in detention Friday after being arrested this week, marking the fifth time he has been arrested for political reasons in the last 18 months, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights said. During previous detentions, he was allegedly raped, repeatedly, the center said. His lawyer, who saw the teenager a day after his latest arrest, told CNN he was limping and showed signs of having been struck in his face and leg.

"They arrested him because he and my brothers are well-known activists in our village and he participated in many protests," the detainee's sister told CNN. She said her brother had contacted the Bahrain Center for Human Rights and told officials there about the torture he allegedly suffered during his previous detention.

Amnesty International released a statement in which it said it feared the 18-year-old may have been targeted again because he reported the abuse.

CNN does not identify rape victims.

On Monday, Bahrain's top court announced that it is creating a judicial panel to review some military court verdicts related to protests last year, the state news agency said.

"A new judicial body comprising a number of judges from the civil courts shall be created in order to review nonappealable verdicts issued in favor of conviction by national safety courts according to international principles of the right to undergo a fair court trial and to access a lawyer for assistance in order to achieve the principles of fair justice," said Sheikh bin Rashid Al Khalifa, the Supreme Judicial Council's deputy chairman and president of the Court of Cassation.

He was quoted by the state-run Bahrain News Agency.

The new judicial body will review nonappealable convictions

pertaining to freedom of expression, but not those related to incitement of violence, it said. The judicial body will then submit the cases to the Supreme Judicial Council "in order to take appropriate actions," it said.

The announcement came a day after witnesses said hundreds of mourners walked the streets of Sitra, south of the capital, behind the coffin carrying the body of a 16-year-old boy who was killed during protests Saturday.

Clashes also occurred Sunday in Sitra between protesters and security forces that fired tear gas at them, injuring several people, witnesses said.

In a New Year's message, Chief of Public Security Tariq Al Hassan announced that 500 officers will be recruited from all sections of Bahrain society in an effort to improve community relations. The officers will wear distinctive uniforms and police only the areas from where they have been recruited, he said.

Noting the highly critical report issued in November by Bahrain's Independent Commission of Inquiry, which looked into the violence, Al Hassan said the task now "is to look at where we've gone wrong, to face our mistakes and learn lessons."

"I am determined to make people understand that we have a responsibility to ensure that whoever breaks the law will be held accountable, whether it is a private citizen or a policeman," said Al Hassan, who has 30 years of experience in Bahrain's police force and studied public security in the United States and Britain.

The commission, set up by the king, concluded that police had used excessive force and torture during last year's crackdown on protests. Abuse of detainees included beatings with metal pipes and batons, and threats of rape and electrocution, commission Chairman Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni said in November.

The mistreatment included physical and psychological torture, intended to extract information or to punish those held by security forces, he said.

The report recommended reforms to the country's law and better training of its security forces.

Protests demanding political reform and greater freedoms in Sunni-ruled, Shiite-majority Bahrain began February 14 before authorities -- backed by troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates -- cracked down on the demonstrations, first in February and later in mid-March.

CNN's Amber Lyon and Samira Said contributed to this report.

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jamesjoni



"CNN was not immediately able to reach Bahraini officials at the president's office for comment." so why? why CNN doesn't seek to get Syrian officials' views about Syria's events but it is trying to get Bahraini officials' comments? that is ...

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jamesjoni

compare media cover about Syria and Bahrain while people even infants are tortured and killed brutally in Bahrain daily.

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(null)

Well here is the video of mr nabeel , cnn ! Todays media is So biased , its all about money isnt it!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDdh87...

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wp123

Interesting , so now the bahraini govt has bribed nabeel rajab too ?

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jamesjoni

when UK's royal family has got bribe from king of Bahrain recently it is not wondering if you think these media didn't.

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justnfree

US and their NATO puppets are playing all their cards against Iran at once, and all of them are losing. Bombs in Iraq targeting Shia, Bombs in Syria targeting police, military crack down in Bahrain, military crack down in Egypt and Yemen, instigating sectarian conflicts, Sanctions, drones, political... [more](#)

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N2CFH

Can we hear any comments by Qatar Chief or he is a proxy side kick for the USA grand plans!

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• *Skialethia*

By way of balance, CNN ought to publish pictures of victims of Rajab's Shia activists, such as the woman with a metal rod through her head and the policeman with a dart through his wrist and those other innocents petrol bombed by Rajab's activists.

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• *antilair*

Nabeel Rajab is the biggest lair in the world and i know him if thy did beat him why the protester didn't record the attack of the police after that all nabeel rajab went to the hospital and thy didn't find any injures on his body and the protester shows a pic from the past and nabeel on it ha... [more](#)

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• *SharifC*

why Americans still supporting these barbaric regimes !

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• *IRANVATAN*

OIL

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• *badindian*

Because America has its Navy's 5th fleet based there. Typical American.. Close your eyes when you have interests in a country..

This is exactly what USA did when they supported Saddam in the 80s to fight against Iranians

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• *DrTrollsman*

This isn't as spicy as syria is at the moment.

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• *(null)*

Just for your information CNN Mr. Nabeel who I think should join Hollywood for his acting yesterday. First of all he threw him self on the ground 2nd his pictures of him self that was posted on twitter the picture was taken in 2005 and next to him is Khawaja who is in prison and he was wearing a bla... [more](#)

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• *emjay911*

/watch?v=aSzlyWqQCZQ

Here you can see the full protest and what really happened to activist Nabeel Rajab. He is the man talking with the police.

@(null)... Maryam Khawaja was actually released two weeks ago !! you people are really out of touch on what is really going in Bahrain !!

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• *kuduson*

the people of bahrain should beat the C.... out of you null
and post it on twitter

and they should say you threw yourself on the ground
or better you beat yourself up

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• *armicnn*

Are you saying he tortured himself enough for the police to pick him up from the street and take him to the hospital? It is all his fault??

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• *lexBirch*

Mmm....andwe should all believe Rajab, why? thisman has spent the last 11 months causing unnecessary blood shed in Bahrain withthis constant lies. He hides behind acrude veneer of being a human rights activist whilst causing the most atrociousinjuries to young and old alike and then runs away. Only... [more](#)

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• *armicnn*

Why not just have free elections and let the people decide who they want to keep and who they want to throw away?

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• *justnfree*

Americans won't let Bahrain fall even if they have to kill every single protester themselves.

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• *justnfree*

Yeah right, Egyptians thought they got democracy but instead it was military dictatorship.

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• *armicnn*

That is what Mubarak used to think would happen in Egypt ;-)

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• *Bobby62*

This dude has balls!

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