Advocacy dossier

Yassin Majed Shehab

ياسين ماجد شهاب

Imprisoned (serving sentence) **Iraq**

Yassin Majed Shehab is an Iraqi Tishreen protest activist who was arrested in Baghdad on 25 September 2025 after coming out of hiding to visit his parents. He was sentenced in October 2025 to three years in prison over a social media video, and was reported still in prison in April 2026.

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The case at a glance

Yassin Majed Shehab is an Iraqi Tishreen protest activist who was arrested in Baghdad on 25 September 2025 after coming out of hiding to visit his parents. He was sentenced in October 2025 to three years in prison over a social media video, and was reported still in prison in April 2026.

Status **Imprisoned (serving sentence)**	Arrested **25 Sep 2025**	Country **Iraq**
Sentence Three years in prison (October 2025), upheld by the Court of Cassation according to his lawyer		
Charges Insulting a public authority under Article 226 of the Iraqi Penal Code, on a complaint by the Minister of the Interior over a social media video (described by GCHR as defamation)		

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Release Yassin Majed Shehab immediately and unconditionally.

02 Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights.

03 Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention.

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How the case unfolded

25 September 2025

Arrest

Arrested in a night raid on his parents' home in Baghdad

Yassin Majed Shehab, a 25-year-old Tishreen activist who had been in hiding, was arrested after briefly leaving his hiding place to visit his ill parents in Baghdad. His family told Amnesty International that the forces brandished weapons, showed no arrest warrant, beat him and dragged him out, and that his pregnant sister was struck on the head when she tried to protect him. GCHR reports that intelligence services carried out the raid.

26 September 2025

Contact with the outside world cut off

Intelligence directorate tells family he is not there

According to Amnesty International, when his family went to the intelligence directorate the day after the raid, officials told them he was not held there. The family said the forces had threatened to detain more relatives if they asked questions.

1 October 2025

Other act

Amnesty International cites his arrest in a Tishreen anniversary report

Marking six years since the Tishreen protests, Amnesty International cited his arrest among cases showing that militias and security forces were pursuing activists, forcing dozens into hiding, exile or prison.

October 2025

Conviction

Sentenced to three years in prison over a social media video

A court sentenced him to three years in prison under Article 226 of the Penal Code after the Minister of the Interior filed a complaint accusing him of a personal insult in a social media video, according to Alhurra. GCHR reports a three-year sentence for defamation based on posts and recordings criticising politicians.

30 March 2026

Other act

His father dies while he is in prison

GCHR reported that his father died in hospital after a stroke, following months of suffering linked to his son's imprisonment.

31 March 2026

Other act

Brother appeals for his release

His brother, Ahmed Majid, appealed to officials to release him, saying their father had died without seeing him. GCHR reported in April 2026 that he remained in prison.

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The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: Yassin Majed Shehab is serving a three-year prison sentence imposed in October 2025 over a social media video criticising officials. The most recent report found, from April 2026, says he remained in prison; no later information on his release has been found.

Background and Work

Yassin Majed Shehab is an Iraqi activist who took part in the Tishreen protests that began in October 2019. Amnesty International reports that he continued afterwards to join protests demanding justice for those killed and forcibly disappeared, and to criticise the authorities on social media. The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) says he used social media to criticise corruption and the failure of politicians to build a state based on institutions. His father told Alhurra that his son was a political activist who spoke about people's rights and concerns.

Amnesty International describes a campaign by militias and security forces against Tishreen activists that has forced dozens into hiding, exile or prison. He was among those who had gone into hiding.

The Arrest

On 25 September 2025, at the age of 25, he briefly left his hiding place to visit his ill parents in Baghdad and was arrested in a raid on the family home. His family told Amnesty International that the forces brandished weapons, showed no arrest warrant, beat him and dragged him out, and threatened to detain more relatives if the family asked questions. His pregnant sister was struck on the head when she tried to protect him. His father told Alhurra that a large force from several security units surrounded the house around midnight. GCHR reports that intelligence services carried out the raid.

The next day the family went to the intelligence directorate, where officials said he was not being held there, according to Amnesty International.

Legal Proceedings

According to Alhurra, after about a week in detention he was tried and, in October 2025, sentenced to three years in prison under Article 226 of the Penal Code, which penalises insulting public authorities. The case followed a complaint by the Minister of the Interior, who accused him of a personal insult in a video posted on social media. GCHR describes the conviction as a three-year sentence for defamation based on social media posts and recordings criticising politicians.

Alhurra reported in December 2025 that the minister withdrew his complaint on 5 December 2025 for humanitarian reasons, but that Yassin Majed Shehab had not been released. His lawyer, Nawal Fajja, said the withdrawal came after the 30-day appeal period had passed and after the Court of Cassation had upheld the ruling, leaving only a request to correct the cassation decision, so he might still have to serve the sentence.

His father told Alhurra in December 2025 that his son had committed no crime, that the family had tried through many channels to secure his release without success, and that he was still waiting for him to come home. Alhurra placed the case in a

wider pattern of prosecutions of activists over online speech in Iraq, quoting Adel Al-Khuzaie, director of the Iraqi Observatory for Rights and Freedoms, who said freedoms in the country were at their lowest point since 2003.

Impact on the Family

GCHR reported that his father died in hospital after a stroke on 30 March 2026, following months of suffering linked to his son's imprisonment. The next day his brother, Ahmed Majid, appealed to officials to release him, saying that their father had died without seeing him.

International Response

Amnesty International cited his arrest in its statement of 1 October 2025 marking six years since the Tishreen protests, as an example of the persecution of protest activists and the threat to freedom of expression in Iraq. GCHR included his case in its 37th periodic report on human rights violations in Iraq, published on 14 April 2026, as a case concerning publication and freedom of expression.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/yassin-majed-shehab/

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