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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ON HUNGER STRIKE

Prominent human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor has been on hunger strike for over three weeks in protest at his prison conditions and his unfair trial. He was convicted and sentenced to 10 years in



Ahmed Mansoor © Private

prison, solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression. The charges against him include "insulting the status and prestige of the UAE and its symbols", including its leaders, "publish[ing] false information to damage [the] UAE's reputation abroad" and "portray[ing] the UAE as a lawless land." Ahmed Mansoor is a prisoner of conscience.

On 31 December 2018, the State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court in Abu Dhabi upheld Ahmed Mansoor's 10-year prison sentence in relation to his human rights work.

According to information received, Ahmed is detained either in Sadr prison or al-Wathba prison, in UAE's capital Abu Dhabi. He has been held in solitary confinement and in poor conditions since his arrest on 20 March 2017. The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the

Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) state that solitary confinement in excess of 15 days can amount to torture or other ill-treatment.

Please send a message to the Prime Minister.

* Ask him to quash Ahmed Mansoor's conviction and sentence, and release him immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, including through his human rights work.

* Until he is free, seek assurances that his conditions of detention are improved in accordance to international standards.

* Call on him to ensure that Ahmed Mansoor is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment and has immediate and regular access to his family and any healthcare he may require.

Write to

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid al-Maktoum

Vice-President and Prime Minister

Prime Minister's Office, PO Box 212000

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Fax: 011 971 4 440 4433

Twitter: @HHShkMohd

Salutation: Your Highness

Please copy

His Excellency Fahad Saeed M. A. Alraqbani
Ambassador for the United Arab Emirates
125 Boteler Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 0A4
Fax: 613 565 8007
Phone: 613 565 7272

Additional information

Ahmed Mansoor is a blogger, a poet and a prominent human rights defender who received the prestigious Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders in 2015. He is a member of the advisory committee of the NGO Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa Division, as well as of the advisory board of the organization Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR). He has documented the human rights situation in the UAE since 2006 and has publicly spoken out in defence of human rights on his blog, via social media and in interviews with international media. Ahmed Mansoor is a long-standing and trusted friend of Amnesty International and other human rights organizations.

Amnesty International has worked very closely with Ahmed Mansoor over the years, relying on his insight and information when the UAE began its choking of civil society in the country. Until his arrest, he was one of the only independent voices still speaking out through his blog and Twitter account against human rights violations from inside the country. Since then, very little reliable information on the human rights situation in the UAE has filtered through.

Ahmed was arrested on 20 March 2017, at his home in the emirate of Ajman in the UAE. A year later his trial started before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Appeal Court. On 29 May 2018, he was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of 1,000,000 Emirati Dirhams (around USD \$270,000). The court also ordered that he be placed under surveillance for three years after his release. He was convicted on charges including "insulting the status and prestige of the UAE and its symbols", including its leaders, "publish[ing] false information to damage [the] UAE's reputation abroad" and "portray[ing] the UAE as a lawless land." He was also charged with "cooperating with a terrorist organization operating outside the country" but was acquitted on this charge on 31 December 2018 by State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court, which upheld his conviction and sentence

Since his arrest, Ahmed has only received very few and restricted family visits, that were initially held in government offices rather than in prison. Since his sentencing, the visits have been taking place in al-Wathba prison, but it remains impossible to verify his exact place of detention as he could be held in the nearby Sadr prison.