

URGENT ACTION

EIGHT LEBANESE MEN AWAIT VERDICT

On 3 April 2019, eight Lebanese men appeared before the state security Chamber of the Federal Appeal Court in Abu Dhabi. They were allowed to speak out about their detention conditions. At least one of them, Abdel Rahman Chouman, described how he was beaten for six hours at a time during the investigation and forced to sign his 'confession' without being allowed to read the document. The Court is to issue its verdict on 15 May, and the families were told that the eight men would be transferred to al-Wathba prison in Abu Dhabi within the following two weeks.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi
Crown Prince Court
King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz
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Your Excellency,

*Eight Lebanese men, including **Abdel Rahman Talal Chouman** (a safety and security trainer with Emirates airlines) and **Ahmed Nimr Sobeh** (a sales consultant at Al Nabooda Automobiles), were arrested by State Security forces between the end of December 2017 and 18 February 2018, on charges including forming a "terrorist" cell and planning "terrorist attacks in the UAE on orders of Hezbollah." On 3 April 2019, the eight men appeared before the state security Chamber of the Federal Appeal Court in Abu Dhabi for the fourth time. They were allowed to speak out, and at least one of them, Abdel Rahman Chouman, described how he was beaten for six hours at a time during the investigation and forced to sign his 'confession' without being allowed to read the document. The court set 15 May for issuing its verdict, and the families were told that the eight men would be transferred to al-Wathba prison in Abu Dhabi within the following two weeks.*

I urge your government to immediately release the eight men unless there is evidence of a recognizable criminal offence, in line with international law and standards; and in the interim, ensure that they are granted immediate and regular access to their lawyer, their families, consular support, and any medical care they may require; and for their trial to meet international standards for fair trials without relying on coerced confessions. I further call on you to order the launch an independent and impartial investigation into the allegations of torture, in line with the Istanbul Protocol on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Kind regards,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Eight Lebanese men, including Abdel Rahman Talal Chouman (a safety and security trainer with Emirates airlines) and Ahmed Nimr Sobeh (a sales consultant at Al Nabooda Automobiles), were arrested by State Security forces between the end of December 2017 and 18 February 2018, on charges including forming a “terrorist” cell and planning “terrorist attacks” in the UAE on orders of Hezbollah. The men were granted short phone calls to their families during which they told them they were being detained for state security issues but were not able to communicate where they were being held.

During the 3 April 2019 trial session, before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Appeal Court in Abu Dhabi, the defendants were allowed to speak out. At least one of them, Abdel Rahman Chouman, described how he was beaten for six hours at a time during the investigation. The judge asked him where this took place to which Abdel Rahman Chouman stated that he did not know where he was being detained as he was blindfolded at all times and that he was forced to sign his ‘confession’ without being allowed to read the document. The judge informed them that they could address their statement including their allegations of torture and ill-treatment in writing to the court. The Court set 15 May for issuing its verdict, and the families were told that the eight men would be transferred to al-Wathba prison in Abu Dhabi within the following two weeks.

All eight men have been held in solitary confinement since their arrest. Solitary confinement for more than 15 days can amount to torture or other ill-treatment according to United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules). Also, Abdel Rahman Chouman was tortured and otherwise ill-treated during the first three months of his detention, including by having his head being hit against a wall and being beaten and kicked, resulting in all his veneer teeth being broken.

The eight men’s trial started on 13 February 2019. None of the detainees were allowed access to their lawyers since the beginning of the trial. The court did not afford the lawyers the full documents relating to the cases of their clients and at least two lawyers have withdrawn from the case. Following the first trial hearing some family members, who had attended the session, were allowed to meet with the detainees for the first time since their arrest. A second family visit took place on 2 April 2019 at the Public Prosecution building in Abu Dhabi where the eight men were brought.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 17 May 2019.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Abdel Rahman Talal Chouman (he/his), Ahmed Nimr Sobeh (he/his), and 6 other men (they/their)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde25/0116/2019/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

And copies to:

Vice-President and Prime Minister

HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin

Rashid al-Maktoum

Prime Minister's Office

PO Box 212000

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Fax: +971 4 330 4044

Email via web: <https://uaecabinet.ae/en/contact-the-prime-minister>

Twitter: @HHSkMohd

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR SULAIMAN HAMID ALMAZROUI, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates, 1-2 Grosvenor Cres, Belgravia London SW1X 7EE, 020 7581 1281, email www.uae-embassy.ae/uk Please check with your section before sending appeals after the above date.

We are recommending delivery by making a PDF of the letter, or scanning a printed copy, and posting it as an image Tweeted at the official's individual Twitter account. This is a bit of an experiment because we have major difficulty in getting valid postal addresses for Arab Gulf states. Twitter offers some advantages in that we can be sure the message is transmitted, even if we can't make the target read it, and in its public nature, which makes it possible that critical Tweets might be noticed if the target is concerned with his public image. The UAE government also prioritises social media engagement for its own brand image.