

URGENT ACTION

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 prison, solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression. 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." Ahmed Mansoor is a prisoner of conscience.

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

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid al-Maktoum

Vice-President and Prime Minister

Prime Minister's Office

PO Box 212000

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Fax: +97144404433

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

Twitter: @HHSkMohd

Your Highness,

Human rights defender, **Ahmed Mansoor**, has been on hunger strike for over three weeks in protest at his detention conditions and his unfair trial. On 31 December 2018, the State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court in Abu Dhabi upheld his 10-year prison sentence in relation to his human rights work. He was charged with "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."

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.

I urge you 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. Pending his release, I call on you to ensure that his detention conditions are improved in accordance to international standards, that he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment; and has immediate and regular access to his family and any healthcare he may require.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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 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. Up 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 organisation 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.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 21 May 2019

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ahmed Mansoor (he/him)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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,

<https://www.mofa.gov.ae/EN/DiplomaticMissions/Embassies/London/Pages/home.aspx>

Please check with your section before sending appeals after the above date.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

Please note that 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.

#FreeAhmed
#humanrightsdefender
#PrisonerOfConscience