

# URGENT ACTION

## JOURNALIST ARRESTED FOR FACEBOOK POST

**Jordanian journalist and poet, Tayseer al-Najjar, was arrested on 13 December 2015 in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates in connection with a comment he posted on his Facebook account in 2014. He has yet to be charged. He may be a prisoner of conscience detained for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.**

**Tayseer Salman al-Najjar**, aged 43, a journalist specialising in culture for the Abu Dhabi al-Dar newspaper, was about to travel to the Jordanian capital Amman to visit his family on 3 December 2015 when he was told at the airport that he was banned from leaving the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In the morning of 13 December, he received a phone call summoning him to attend the Security Department in Abu Dhabi at 7pm. He spoke to his wife, who was in Jordan, by phone just before he entered the building and was arrested shortly after.

Tayseer al-Najjar's family were unaware of his whereabouts and the reasons for his arrest until he was allowed to call them on 18 February 2016. He told them that he was being held at the State Security Department in solitary confinement and put under "heavy pressure". About ten days later, he made another call to his wife stating that he had been transferred to al-Wathba prison in Abu Dhabi. He has been able to phone his family on a weekly basis. Tayseer al-Najjar said that he was accused by security officers of having links to the Muslim Brotherhood, of collaborating with Qatar and of insulting the UAE and its leaders in connection with a 2014 posting on his Facebook account, in which he praised the Palestinian's resistance in Gaza and criticized countries including the UAE.

On 11 May he told his wife that for the past two weeks he had been suffering from severe toothache that kept him awake at night and that he had not been referred to a dentist but instead given a mild painkiller.

### **Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:**

- Calling on the UAE authorities to explain to Tayseer Salman al-Najjar why has he been arrested, and urging them to either charge him promptly with a recognizable criminal offence or else release him immediately and unconditionally if he has been held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure that while he is detained, he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and given prompt access to a lawyer of his choice and any necessary medical treatment he may require.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 JUNE 2016 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: info@primeminister.ae  
Twitter: @HSHkMoh

**Salutation: Your Highness**

#### Minister of Interior

Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan  
Zayed Sport City, Arab Gulf Street, Near  
to Shaikh Zayed Mosque  
POB: 398, Abu Dhabi  
United Arab Emirates  
Fax: +971 2 402 2762/ +971 2 441 5780  
Email: moi@moi.gov.ae

**Salutation: Your Highness**

#### **And copies to:**

Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi  
HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al  
Nahyan  
Crown Prince Court  
King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz  
Al Saud Street,  
P.O. Box: 124  
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
Fax: +971 2 668 6622  
Twitter: @MBZNews

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HIS EXCELLENCY MR ABDULRAHMAN GHANEM  
ALMUTAIWEE CVO, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates, 30 Prince's Gate, London SW7 1PT, 020 7581 1281, email pressuk@mofa.gov.ae  
Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Tayseer Salman al-Najjar is married and a father of five young children who live in Jordan. He moved from Jordan to the UAE in April 2015 to join Al Jawa, a large publishing house in the UAE, ahead of the launch of al-Dar weekly newspaper in January 2016 for whom he was to write in the cultural pages.

In July 2014, during the Gaza conflict, Tayseer al-Najjar had posted on his Facebook page “Message to some journalists and writers who do not like the Gazan resistance ... There is no two rights in one case, but the right one is the Gazan resistance and all else is bad, such as Israel, the UAE, [The President of Egypt] Sissi and other systems that are no longer ashamed of shame itself.”

Since 2011, the UAE authorities have mounted an unprecedented crackdown on freedom of expression and association in the country. The space for dissent has shrunk severely and many people, both Emiratis and non-Emiratis who have criticised the UAE authorities, their policies, or the human rights situation in the country have been harassed, arrested, tortured, or subjected to unfair trial and imprisonment. The authorities have arrested, detained, and prosecuted more than 100 activists, human rights defenders and other critics of the government, including prominent lawyers, judges and academics, on broad and sweeping national security-related or cybercrime charges and in proceedings that fail to meet international fair trial standards. Some individuals previously subjected to enforced disappearance have said they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated and were forced to make “confessions” during interrogations without the presence of a lawyer. The State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court often allows the use of such “confessions,” in contravention of international human rights law, and convicts defendants even when they have repudiated them.

Under Article 49 of the UAE’s 2014 law on Combating Terrorism, a suspect can be held for 14 days following interrogation, and then up to three months, by court order.

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