

# URGENT ACTION

## INCOMMUNICADO DETAINEE AT RISK OF TORTURE

Lebanese detainee Ahmad Ali Mekkaoui has been held incommunicado since 11 April 2019. He is at heightened risk of torture and other ill-treatment. Ahmad Ali Mekkaoui is serving a 15-year prison sentence in the United Arab Emirates on “terrorism” charges. Legal proceedings against him have been seriously flawed, including arbitrary detention, excessive pre-trial detention, forced confessions, allegations of torture, and lack of access to medical care. In April 2019, the Prosecutor pressed new speech-related charges against Ahmad following a TV news report in which his sister and legal consultant were interviewed about Ahmad’s torture and unfair trial.

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

*Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan  
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Your Highness,

*On 11 April 2019, Lebanese prisoner Ahmad Ali Mekkaoui was transferred to incommunicado detention and is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. On the same day, Ahmad Ali Mekkaoui informed his sister over phone that the prosecution filed a new case against him, his sister and his legal consultant in Lebanon, on charges of publishing false information seeking to damage the reputation of the UAE. Ahmad said those were in relation to a TV news report in which his sister and his legal consultant described Ahmad’s torture and prison conditions in the UAE.*

*On 31 October 2016, the State Security Chamber at the Federal Supreme Court had sentenced Ahmad Ali Mekkaoui to 15 years in prison on charges including communicating with Lebanese political party and armed group Hezbollah, disclosing classified information and establishing an unauthorized foreign international group in the UAE. Ahmad informed the Public prosecutor that he was subjected to long incommunicado pre-trial detention, torture and ill-treatment including beatings on his face, ripping out his toenails, scalping, and raping him with a steel rod. However, the torture allegations were never investigated, and the court relied on the false “confessions” obtained under torture to convict him.*

*I urge you to quash the unreliable conviction and release Ahmad Ali Mekkaoui, unless there is evidence of a recognizable criminal offence in line with international law and standards. In the interim, I call on you to ensure that he is granted immediate and regular access to his lawyer, family, consular assistance, and any medical care he may require. I further call on you to launch an independent and impartial investigation into the claims of torture, as provided by the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and also in line with the Istanbul Protocol on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.*

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmad Mekkaoui is a 52-year-old Sunni Lebanese national, from Tripoli, North Lebanon. Prior to his arrest, Ahmad ran a car repair company that he owned in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates' capital.

On 13 October 2014, plain-clothed State Security Personnel arbitrarily arrested Ahmad Mekkaoui at his house in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Ahmad was only able to call his wife twice during his first two days of detention and told her that he was "very tired". His family did not hear from him for the following nine months, during which he was held incommunicado in an undisclosed location. During that time, Ahmad was kept in solitary confinement and was forced to sign "confessions" under torture. He was scalped, raped with a steel rod, beaten on the face, and deprived from sleeping for two weeks. As a result, he sustained several injuries including sight loss in one eye, broken nose and fingers, a tearing in the rectum and a growth in the neck. Ahmad underwent three operations at the Zayed Military Hospital in Abu Dhabi. In October 2018, Lebanese newspaper al-Akhbar [published](#) voice recordings of Ahmad in which he described accounts of his torture.

In January 2016, 14 months after his arrest, Ahmad's trial started before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court, along with six co-defendants. On 31 October 2016, the court sentenced Ahmad to 15 years imprisonment on charges of "communicating with Hezbollah", a Shi'a political party and armed group based in Lebanon, "with the aim of harming the military and political status of the United Arab Emirates and its national interests; disclosing classified defense secrets to Hezbollah and establishing an international organization inside the United Arab Emirates without obtaining authorization from the Government." The sentence was final and could not be appealed as it took place before the UAE introduced a new Federal Law (No 11/2016) allowing an appeals procedure for cases relating to state security.

On 15 September 2017, the United Nations Working Group on arbitrary detention issued an [opinion \(Opinion No. 47/2017\)](#) in which it deemed the "deprivation of liberty" of Ahmad Mekkaoui arbitrary.

On 11 April 2019, Ahmad called his family and told them that the Prosecutor pressed new charges against him for "harming the reputation of the UAE", following a TV interview in which his sister and his Lebanese lawyer spoke about his case. Ahmad has been held incommunicado since then.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Arabic/English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 12 July 2019

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

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Ahmad Ali Mekkaoui (he/his)

## ADDITIONAL TARGETS

***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.***

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** His Excellency MR SULAIMAN HAMID Embassy of the United Arab Emirates 1-2 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EF 020 7581 1281 Fax 020 7581 9616 [www.uae-embassy.ae/uk](http://www.uae-embassy.ae/uk) Please check with your section before sending appeals after the above date.