

# URGENT ACTION

## PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN NEW MASS TRIAL

Human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience Ahmed Mansoor, Mohammed al-Roken and Nasser bin Ghaith are among 87 Emirati men being prosecuted in a new case on trumped up terrorism-related charges. Their trial, which began on 7 December before the Federal Appeal Court in Abu Dhabi, includes 62 unjustly imprisoned victims of the 2013 mass trial, known as the UAE94, 59 of whom remain arbitrarily detained after serving their sentences.

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

**Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan**

President of the United Arab Emirates

Twitter: @MohamedBinZayed

Your Highness,

*I am concerned that 26 prisoners of conscience including Ahmed Mansoor, Nasser bin Ghaith and Mohammed al-Roken are among 87 Emirati men prosecuted on new trumped up charges. Their mass trial started on 7 December 2023 before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Appeal Court in Abu Dhabi. Among other defendants are 62 political dissidents unjustly convicted and sentenced to imprisonment in the grossly unfair mass trial known as the UAE94 that concluded in 2013. Fifty-nine of them remain arbitrarily detained following the completion of their sentences.*

*According to the [Emirates Detainees Advocacy Center](#) (EDAC), a human rights group, the court charged 43 individuals with establishing a “terrorist organization,” while 44 others were charged with supporting and endorsing the organization. The “terrorist organization” referred to is the Justice and Dignity Committee, formed by defendants in the UAE94 case in 2010-2011 to call for the respect of human rights in the UAE. Defendants from the earlier UAE94 mass trial were already convicted and sentenced to prison terms in relation to their involvement in the Justice and Dignity Committee in 2013. This contravenes article 19(1) of the [Arab Charter for Human Rights](#), to which the UAE is party, which states: “No one may be tried twice for the same offence. Anyone against whom such proceedings are brought shall have the right to challenge their legality and to demand his release.” Defendants’ rights to a fair trial have been violated, including the right to a public hearing in front of an independent and impartial tribunal, their right to adequate defence, their right to be protected from torture and other ill-treatment and their right not to self-incriminate. During the second court session on 14 December, family members of prisoners were taken to a separate room to watch the proceedings on a screen; there was no sound, preventing them from hearing proceedings. Since July 2023, the authorities have held the majority of the UAE94 defendants in incommunicado detention and in prolonged solitary confinement. Salim al-Shehhi, a prisoner of conscience, told the court at the 7 December hearing that authorities had compelled him to sign a “confession” while holding him in solitary confinement. The next hearing is scheduled for 21 December.*

***We call upon your Highness to immediately and unconditionally release prisoners of conscience Ahmed Mansoor, Mohammed al-Roken, Nasser bin Ghaith and all others arbitrarily detained and prosecuted in the ongoing mass trial solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association; and to drop all charges against them stemming from their exercise of their human rights.***

*Yours sincerely,*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 2011, scores of people in the UAE have been detained in relation to the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association. In 2012, after a grossly unfair [mass trial](#) of 94 defendants, known as the UAE94, 69 people were convicted and sentenced to between seven and 15-year prison terms, scores of them for their demands for reform and democracy. Under UAE law at the time, the judgement was final and not subject to appeal, in violation of international law. Of the 69 men sentenced, five received a seven-year prison sentence, 56 a 10-year prison sentence and eight were sentenced to 15 years in their absence. Fifty-nine of [those imprisoned in the case](#) remain arbitrarily detained after completing their sentences.

Prominent human rights lawyer and former president of the UAE's Jurists Association, Mohammed al-Roken, was arrested on 17 July 2012. He was sentenced in July 2013 to 10 years' imprisonment, followed by three years' probation, at the end of the UAE 94 trial. He should have been released from prison on 17 July 2022.

On 17 May 2023, Turkish-Emirati citizen [Khalaf al-Rumaithi](#), was forcibly deported to the UAE from Jordan. He was one of the UAE 94 sentenced to 15 years in prison in his absence and had been living exile in Türkiye for the past decade, but had flown to Jordan on 7 May 2023 in search of an Arabic school for his children. The state-owned Emirates News Agency, announcing his deportation from Jordan and arrest in the UAE, said that he will face a retrial on the charge of affiliation with an organization "[that aims to oppose the foundational principles of the UAE government](#)". In 2021, Mansoor al-Ahmadi, one the UAE 94 defendants sentenced to seven years in prison was released about a year and half after his sentence ended. He was re-arrested in June 2023 after attending a summons at the State Security Apparatus in Abu Dhabi. Both Khalaf al-Rumaithi and Mansoor al-Ahmadi are now defendants in the new mass trial.

Human rights defender [Ahmed Mansoor](#) was arrested on 20 March 2017, and sentenced in May 2018 to 10 years' imprisonment. He was convicted on charges including having "[insulted the 'status and prestige of the UAE and its symbols', including its leaders](#)". Since his arrest, Ahmed Mansoor has been held in solitary confinement. Up until his arrest, he was the only independent voice still brave enough to speak out against human rights violations from inside the country after the end of the 2013 mass trial.

Human rights defender [Nasser bin Ghaith](#) is serving a 10-year prison sentence handed to him on 29 March 2017 by the Federal Appeal Court in Abu Dhabi. He was convicted on charges including "posting false information" about UAE leaders and their policies, based on comments he made on X (formerly Twitter) stating that an earlier trial of himself and four other Emiratis was unfair. During his trial in 2017, the authorities restricted his access to his lawyer and he was unable to prepare adequately for his defence.

The UAE has yet to ratify key human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Nonetheless many of the provisions of the two covenants are drawn from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which have over time become part of customary international law and are therefore typically binding on all states.

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

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 13 February 2024

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); Mohammed al-Roken (he/him); Nasser bin Ghaith (he/him)

## ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Vice-President and Prime Minister  
Mohammed Bin Rashid al Maktoum  
Twitter: @HShkMohd  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HHSheikhMohammed/>  
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