

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER BANNED FROM TRAVEL

**The United Arab Emirates (UAE) authorities have banned prominent human rights defender and blogger Ahmed Mansoor from traveling, so he cannot attend the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders ceremony in Switzerland on 6 October.**

The UAE authorities have prevented prominent human rights defender and blogger **Ahmed Mansoor** from going to an award ceremony, by arbitrarily imposing a travel ban. He is a finalist for the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders, and has been invited to attend the award ceremony in the Swiss city of Geneva on 6 October.

The UAE authorities have refused to return his passport, which they confiscated when he was arbitrarily arrested in 2011, so he will be prevented from attending the award ceremony in Geneva. They have given him contradictory reasons for failing to return it. Both the travel ban and the confiscation of his passport violate Ahmed Mansoor's right under international human rights law to freedom of movement, as these measures were taken to punish him for his peaceful human rights activism. He is one of the few people in the UAE speaking out about human rights violations in the country.

Ahmed Mansoor, from Dubai, has faced years of intimidation and harassment because of his human rights work. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in 2011, after an unfair trial, for "insulting" the UAE's President and Vice-President, and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. He has since been threatened on Facebook, Twitter and other social media by people who say they will "chop off" his head and that "Ahmed Mansoor should be hanged from a lamp post." He has been physically assaulted and was the target of a smear campaign that circulated in the UAE on social media and SMS messages, labelling him a "traitor". He is still under tight surveillance: his computer, and email and Twitter accounts have been hacked, and his phone is monitored. At times, surveillance cars have been parked outside his house continuously for weeks at a time.

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

- Calling on the UAE authorities to lift Ahmed Mansoor's travel ban immediately, return and renew his passport and allow him to travel to Geneva to attend the ceremony of the Martin Ennals Award;
- Urging them to ensure that he is able to carry out his peaceful human rights activities without fear of harassment and reprisals, and ensure that he is protected in accordance with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 OCTOBER 2015 TO:

#### Vice-President and Prime Minister

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum  
Prime Minister's Office  
PO Box: 212000,  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
Fax: 011 971 4 330 4044  
Twitter: @HHSkMohd  
Email (via website):  
<http://www.sheikhmohammed.com/vgn-ext-templating/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=dec9001ff133e210VgnVCM1000004d64a8c0RCRD>

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: 011 971 2 402 2762/ 011 971 2 441 5780  
Twitter: @SaifBZay  
Email (via website):  
<https://www.moi.gov.ae/en/contactus/contactusform.aspx>  
Salutation: Your Highness

#### And copies to:

#### Minister of Justice

Dr Hadeef bin Jua'an Al Dhaheri  
Ministry of Justice – Abu Dhabi  
Al Khubirah, Sector 93  
Street 5, P.O. Box 260  
Abu Dhabi  
United Arab Emirates

#### Also send copies to:

Ambassador Yousef Al Otaiba, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates  
3522 International Court NW Suite #400, Washington DC 20008  
Fax: 1 202 243 2432 | Phone: 1 202 243 2400 | Email: [info@uaeembassy-usa.org](mailto:info@uaeembassy-usa.org)

Please let us know if you took action so that we can track our impact! EITHER send a short email to [uan@aiusa.org](mailto:uan@aiusa.org) with "UA 200/15" in the subject line, and include in the body of the email the number of letters and/or emails you sent, OR fill out this [short online form](#) to let us know how you took action. Thank you for taking action! Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if taking action after the appeals date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmed Mansoor is a member of the Advisory Committee of the NGO Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa Division, as well as the Advisory Board of the organization Gulf Center for Human Rights. He has documented the human rights situation in the UAE since 2006 and has spoken out publicly in defense of international human rights standards through his blog, via social media, through interviews with international media and via communications with human rights organizations and UN human rights bodies.

On 3 March 2011, Ahmed Mansoor and other prominent figures in the UAE sent a petition signed by a group of 133 leading citizens including lawyers and academics to the country's President. The petition called for political reform in the UAE, including universal suffrage and for the UAE's quasi-parliamentary body, the Federal National Council, to be given full legislative powers. In response, the UAE authorities arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned Ahmed Mansoor and four other activists a month later. They prosecuted all five on charges of "publicly insulting" the UAE's President, Vice-President and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi in comments posted on an online discussion forum. Ahmed Mansoor and the other men were convicted on 27 November 2011 after a trial that fell short of international standards. Ahmed Mansoor was sentenced to three years' imprisonment but he and the others received a presidential pardon the day after they were convicted.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention determined in September 2011 that the detention of Ahmed Mansoor was arbitrary, and called on the UAE government to remedy the situation by releasing him and providing him with adequate reparation. However, though they have released Ahmed Mansoor, the government have not provided him with any form of reparation. The presidential pardon was never confirmed in writing and it remains uncertain whether his criminal record has been expunged.

Since his release, Ahmed Mansoor has continued to face intimidation and reprisals. He was assaulted on 11 and 17 September 2012 at Ajman University, where he had been studying law. It appears that his attackers may have intended to intimidate him into ceasing his legal studies and carrying out his human rights activities. After the second assault, Ahmed Mansoor stopped his studies.

The authorities have also failed since 2012 to provide him with a "certificate of good conduct", which is a prerequisite to obtaining employment in the UAE, although the waiting time for these certificates is normally around three working days.

Other forms of harassment Ahmed Mansoor has experienced have included the fraudulent withdrawal of around US\$140,000 from his bank account and the theft of his car in January 2013. When Ahmed Mansoor filed a complaint about the theft of his money, the office of the Prosecutor in Abu Dhabi asked him to visit the office to answer some questions in connection with the theft. After the questioning, Ahmed Mansoor found that his car, which he had parked in the well-guarded parking lot of the Prosecution and Court building, had been stolen. He filed another complaint about the car. However, the police have not produced a report about the theft. Without a police report, Ahmed Mansoor's insurance company has refused to pay compensation for the vehicle. The car has never been recovered, nor has the person who stole it been arrested. Ahmed Mansoor has filed a number of complaints with the police and other official bodies but has received no information about any progress of the investigations into the assaults, death threats and other harassment.

**Name:** Ahmed Mansoor (m)

**Issues:** Human rights defender, Freedom of expression, Legal concern

**UA:** 200/15

**Issue Date:** 17 September 2015

**Country:** United Arab Emirates (UAE)