

# URGENT ACTION

## UAE: MORE ACTIVISTS DETAINED; RISK OF TORTURE

**At least 14 more political activists have been detained since 18 July in an ongoing wave of arrests in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Their location, and that of 13 men arrested previously, is unknown, placing them at increased risk of torture or other ill-treatment.**

Dr. Issa al-Suwaidi, former director of Abu Dhabi Educational Zone, Juma al-Felasi and Tariq al-Qasim were arrested on 19 July. Dr. Saif al-Ajlal, Hamad Roqait, Mohamed al-Naqbi, Dr. Adnan Julfar, Tariq Hassan al-Qattan, Musabeh al-Rumaithi, Abdulraheem al-Zarooni and Abdulsalam Darwish were arrested on 24 July. Saeed Naser al-Wahidi and Ali Al-Manei from Abu Dhabi were arrested on 25 July. Lawyer Salem al-Shehhi was arrested on 18 July when he went to the State Security Prosecutor's office to ask about his clients, including two prisoners of conscience - human rights defenders Dr. Mohamed al-Mansoori and Dr. Mohamed 'Abdullah al-Roken - who had been arrested on 16 and 17 July respectively. Amnesty International believes that Salem al-Shehhi is also a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful work as a defense lawyer.

Lawyer Dr. Mohamed 'Abdullah al-Roken was arrested while driving to a police station in Dubai to report that his son Rashid Mohamed al-Roken and son-in-law 'Abdullah al-Hajeri had gone missing. Others previously arrested include lawyer and former UAE Jurists' Association head Dr. Mohamed al-Mansoori; director of the Centre for the Memorization of the Qur'an Abdul-Rahman al-Hadidi; Rashid al-Shamsi; Hussain al-Najjar; Omran al-Radhwan; Khaled al-Shaiba; Dr. Ibrahim al-Yassi; Mahmoud al-Hoosani; 'Issa al-Sari; and Khalifa al-Nu'aيمي. On 28 July, Dr. Ibrahim al-Yassi's wife, Fatima al-Salagi was banned from leaving the country to go to Saudi Arabia.

The whereabouts of all 27 men are unknown. Some of them are associated with the Reform and Social Guidance Association (*al-Islah*), a non-violent group that has been engaged in peaceful political debate in the UAE for many years and advocates greater adherence to Islamic precepts.

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

- Urging the UAE authorities to release immediately and unconditionally any of the 27 - including Dr. Mohamed 'Abdullah al-Roken and Dr. Mohamed al-Mansoori - held solely for peacefully expressing their conscientiously held beliefs or for carrying out their professional duties, and to release any others held, unless they are to be tried promptly on an internationally recognizable criminal charge in full accordance with international fair trial standards;
- Urging them to disclose the location of all 27 men immediately, ensure that they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment and have access to lawyers of their choice, their families and all necessary medical treatment;
- Calling on them to remove unlawful restrictions on the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 SEPTEMBER 2012 TO:

#### Vice-President and Prime Minister

Shaikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum

Office of the Prime Minister

POB 2838, Dubai, UAE

Fax: 011 971 4 3531974

Email via website:

<http://www.uaepm.ae/en/communicate/index.html>

Salutation: Your Highness

#### Minister of Interior

Lt-General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al-Nahyan

Human Rights Directorate

POB: 398, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Fax: 011 971 4 3981119

Salutation: Your Excellency

#### And copies to:

#### Minister of Justice

Dr. Hadeef bin Jua'an Al Dhaheri

Ministry of Justice

Al Khubirah, Sector 93, Street 5

P.O. Box 260

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Fax: 011 971 2 6810680

Salutation: Your Excellency

#### Also send copies to:

Ambassador Yousef Al Otaiba, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates

3522 International Court NW #400, Washington DC 20008

Phone: 1 202 243 2400 | Fax: 1 202 243 2432 | Email: [info@uaeembassy-usa.org](mailto:info@uaeembassy-usa.org)

Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# URGENT ACTION

## UAE: MORE ACTIVISTS DETAINED; RISK OF TORTURE

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The wave of arrests follow an announcement by Abu Dhabi's Public Prosecutor on 15 July that a group of people would be investigated for plotting "crimes against state security", "opposing the UAE constitution and ruling system", and having ties to "foreign organizations and agendas".

The United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven emirates, each governed by an absolute ruler called an *amir*. The individual emirates do not hold local elections. Instead, a regionally determined and selected National Electoral Committee elects half the members of a consultative body, the 40-person Federal National Council (FNC), which sits in Abu Dhabi. The other 20 are appointed by the President. The term of office is two years. Within its limited remit, the FNC can examine and amend federal legislation but not veto it.

Political parties are not formally permitted in the UAE; political dissent is not readily tolerated and there are severe restrictions on freedom of expression and association, which have been increasing in recent months. The authorities have closed down online discussion forums and political websites or blocked access to them from the UAE. On 9 March 2011, over 130 civil and political rights activists in the UAE petitioned the President to introduce universal, direct elections.

Most people suspected of political offenses in the UAE are arrested by the *Amn al-Dawla* (State Security) and held incommunicado at undisclosed locations for typically around a week before they are allowed to make brief and limited phone calls to their families. After release or while on trial, some have spoken of being tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

Dr Mohammad al-Roken was one of the defense lawyers in the case of the five UAE residents arrested in April 2011, known as the "UAE 5". In June 2011, they were tried unfairly before the Supreme Court on criminal defamation charges relating to articles posted on an online forum, some calling for political reform and others critical of some UAE government policies. Amnesty International considered all five – Ahmed Mansour, a human rights activist and blogger; Nasser bin Ghaith, a university lecturer and advocate of political reform; and online activists Fahad Salim Dalk, Ahmed Abdul Khaleq and Hassan Ali al-Khamis – to be prisoners of conscience. While held, they were targeted in a campaign of vilification on social networking sites. On 27 November 2011, Ahmed Mansour was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and the other four to two years. All five were released the following day after a presidential pardon, in advance of the UAE's national day, on 2 December 2011. Despite the pardon, they still have criminal records, which should be overturned. On 16 July 2012, Ahmed Abdul Khaleq, was forced to leave the country for exile in Thailand as otherwise he faced indefinite detention (see: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/uae-bidun-blogger-forced-leave-country-raising-alarm-after-wave-arbitrary-arrests-2012-07-16>).

On 17 July 2012, a spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) expressed his concern at the accelerating crackdown on human rights defenders in the UAE. He referred to harassment, denial of travel, termination of work contracts, arrests, denaturalization and expulsion from the country as methods being used by the UAE authorities to repress activists in the UAE.

**Names:** Salem al-Shehhi, Dr. Issa al-Suwaidi, Juma al-Felasi, Tariq al-Qasim, Dr. Saif al-Ajlal, Hamad Roqait, Mohamed al-Naqbi, Dr. Adnan Julfar, Tariq Hassan al-Qattan, Musabeh al-Rumaithi, Abdulrahmeem al-Zarooni, Abdulsalam Darwish, Saeed Naser al-Wahidi, Ali Al-Manei, Mohammad al-Roken, Rashid al-Roken, 'Abdullah al-Hajeri, Mohammad al-Mansoori, Abdul-Rahman al-Hadidi, Rashid al-Shamsi, Hussain al-Najjar, Omran al-Radhwan, Khaled al-Shaiba, Ibrahim al-Yassi, Mohamed al-Hoosan, 'Issa al-Sari and Khalifa al-Nu'aimi

**Issues:** Prisoners of conscience, Enforced disappearance, Freedom of expression

**Further information on UA:** 214/12 (18 July 2012)

**Issue Date:** 30 July 2012

**Country:** UAE