

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Amnesty International calls on UAE to end torture and secret detention, ensure fair trials**

### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on United Arab Emirates***

Torture and other ill-treatment remain common in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), including through denial of medical care to detainees.

While Amnesty International welcomes UAE's accept of a recommendation to reject evidence obtained by torture,<sup>1</sup> it sincerely regrets its rejection of recommendations to investigate acts of torture, to prohibit the practice of secret detention,<sup>2</sup> and to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.<sup>3</sup>

The government must prohibit and prevent all forms of torture and other ill-treatment, and ensure that all allegations of torture or other ill-treatment are promptly and thoroughly investigated, and those responsible held to account. The practice of secret detention must be prohibited.

Trials in the UAE remain flawed and unfair. The judicial system lacks independence, including through the appointment of judges of the Federal Supreme Court by executive decree. The courts are neither independent nor impartial, especially when trying cases under broad and sweeping national security provisions in the Penal Code or the cybercrimes or counter-terrorism laws.

Amnesty International welcomes UAE's support of recommendations to ensure the right to a fair trial for all,<sup>4</sup> but regrets that recommendations to ensure detainees are informed of the charges against them and have access to legal counsel have been rejected.<sup>5</sup> This undermines any commitment to fair trial standards.

UAE must urgently ensure that no one is arbitrarily arrested or detained, that individuals are held only on the basis of internationally recognizable offences and brought promptly before an independent court, and must have immediate access to their lawyer and family, and to adequate medical care when required.

The UAE continues to convict and imprison human rights defenders and government critics. Amnesty International is concerned that some of them are prisoners of conscience detained

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/38/14, recommendation 141.134 (Czechia).

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/38/14, recommendations 141.109-110 (Qatar, Italy).

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/38/14, recommendation 141.17-18 (Austria, Czechia), 141.23 (Denmark, Portugal).

<sup>4</sup> A/HRC/38/14, recommendations 141.134 (Czechia), 141.141 (Australia).

<sup>5</sup> A/HRC/38/14, recommendations 141.142-143 (Chile, USA).

solely for their human rights work. This includes Ahmed Mansoor who was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in May merely for posting on Facebook and Twitter. Amnesty International calls for his immediate release and that of all other prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty International welcomes UAE's acceptance of recommendations to ensure the protection of human rights defenders,<sup>6</sup> however, is deeply concerned by its lack of support of recommendations to ensure a safe work environment for human rights defenders and to protect them from reprisals for cooperating with the UN.<sup>7</sup>

The organization is concerned that UAE resumed executions in 2017, the first executions since 2015. It is also regrettable that UAE rejected all 16 recommendations related to the death penalty.<sup>8</sup> UAE should immediately establish an official moratorium on executions, pending full abolition of the death penalty.

## **Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of United Arab Emirates on 29 June 2018 during its 38<sup>th</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered this oral statement.

Public Document

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK

[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

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<sup>6</sup> A/HRC/38/14, recommendations 141.127-129 (France, Norway, Latvia).

<sup>7</sup> A/HRC/38/14, recommendations 141.130-132 (Belgium, Austria, Ghana).

<sup>8</sup> A/HRC/38/14, recommendations 141.13-15 (Chile, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Australia, Ghana, Moldova, Slovakia), 141.96-108 (Mozambique, Austria, Liechtenstein, Portugal, Slovenia, Australia, Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, Montenegro, UK, Mexico).