

# URGENT ACTION

## BUSINESSMAN DETAINED, AT RISK OF TORTURE

**Businessman Dr Amer al-Shawa, a former academic, was arrested on arrival at Dubai airport on 2 October 2014. He is being held in an unknown location with no access to his family or a lawyer of his choosing in conditions amounting to enforced disappearance. He may be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.**

**Dr Amer al-Shawa**, a 50-year-old Turkish citizen of Palestinian origin, was arrested after his flight from Istanbul landed at Dubai International Airport on 2 October 2014. He had been planning to attend a family wedding in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) when he was detained by officers from the UAE's State Security apparatus. Dr Amer al-Shawa managed to send two SMS messages to alert a family friend before his mobile phone was confiscated. His family did not hear from him until 14 October, when his wife received a short phone call, during which he said he was fine and that the people detaining him needed to keep him "for some formalities for a few more days." His family have not heard from him since, nor have they been told why he was arrested and detained, despite asking many official bodies, including the police and the Ministry of Interior.

The office of the Turkish Consul General in Dubai has told Dr Amer al-Shawa's wife, Emel Inal that he was taken to Abu Dhabi, but nothing more. Emel Inal has tried to hire a lawyer to find out where her husband is being detained, why he was arrested and what charges he is facing. All of the nine law firms that she has contacted in Abu Dhabi have refused to help.

The UAE authorities have harassed, intimidated and imprisoned many human rights defenders in recent years, so very few lawyers are now willing to defend activists and other people arrested by the country's State Security apparatus.

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

- Calling on the UAE authorities to immediately disclose the whereabouts of Dr Amer al-Shawa, reveal the legal basis for his detention, and grant him immediate and regular access to his family and a lawyer of his choosing;
- Urging them to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and is provided with any medical care he may require.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 FEBRUARY 2015 TO:**

#### Minister of Interior

HH Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan  
Ministry of Interior  
Zayed Sport City, Arab Gulf Street, Near  
to Sheikh Zayed Mosque  
Abu Dhabi, PO Box 398  
United Arab Emirates (UAE)  
Fax: +971 2 4022762;  
+971 2 4415780  
Email: moi@moi.gov.ae

**Salutation: Your Highness**

#### Vice-President and Prime Minister

HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin  
Rashid al-Maktoum  
Prime Minister's Office  
PO Box: 212000  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)  
Fax: + +971 4 330 4044  
Email: info@primeminister.ae  
Twitter: @HShkMoh

**Salutation: Your Highness**

#### **And copies to:**

#### President

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan  
Ministry of Presidential Affairs  
Corniche Road  
Abu Dhabi, PO Box 280  
United Arab Emirates (UAE)  
Fax: +971 2 622 2228  
Email: ihtimam@mopa.ae

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The UAE authorities have arrested dozens of foreign nationals in recent years. Many have been subjected to enforced disappearance, held in secret locations by officials who refused to acknowledge their detention or give any information to their families – such as the reasons and legal basis for their imprisonment, where they were being held, and in what conditions. The authorities have also denied them access to legal counsel. Such conditions breach the UAE's own laws, as well as international law. Many of those arrested have been held in solitary confinement and have claimed they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated while under interrogation.

For example, UAE officials detained two Qatari men, Yousif Abdulsamad Abdulghani al-Mullah and Hamad Ali Mohammed al-Hamadi, on 27 June 2014, at the al-Ghuwaifat border post on the UAE's western border with Saudi Arabia and have subjected them to enforced disappearance ever since. It is not known why the men were arrested, since each of them had previously visited the UAE a number of times without incident. Their families have not heard from the men since their arrest.

Between 13 August and 3 September 2014, at least 10 Libyan men, some with dual nationality, were also detained by the UAE authorities and held at unknown locations. On 26 August, businessman Kamal Eldarat, a US citizen, was summoned for questioning at Dubai's Bur Dubai police station. Around 20 officers in six police vehicles took him to his house, which they searched, and then detained him. His son, US citizen Mohammed Eldarat, was detained the next day. Mohammed el-Arabi was summoned for questioning by police on 28 August. Security officials then took him to his house, which they searched, before taking him to an unknown location. His brother Salim el-Arabi was arrested the same day. Both men had lived in the UAE for around 20 years. All the men are thought to have been detained by the UAE's State Security apparatus. Four were released in December and deported to Turkey but the rest are still detained in unknown locations.

Since 2012, dozens of Egyptian nationals have also been subjected to enforced disappearance in the UAE. In November 2013, 20 Egyptian nationals who had been held for months in unknown locations were taken out of secret detention to face trial before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court on charges including establishing an "international" branch of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood organization and stealing and distributing secret state documents. In court, many of the defendants complained that State Security officials had subjected them to torture and other ill-treatment during their lengthy pre-trial detention in secret locations, when they were held incommunicado. Some said they had been coerced into signing "confessions" or other incriminating statements during this time, which prosecutors submitted to the court as evidence against them.

Amnesty International documented the cases of the Egyptian nationals and also of Qatari national Dr Mahmoud al-Jaidah in a November 2014 report. He had been subjected to enforced disappearance, and tortured and otherwise ill-treated, for a number of months before being sentenced to seven years' imprisonment following an unfair trial. The report, "There is no freedom here" – Silencing dissent in the United Arab Emirates, is available here: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE25/018/2014/en>

Name: Amer al-Shawa

Gender m/f: m

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