

URGENT ACTION

SOMALI MAN DETAINED IN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Somali national Boqor Osman Mohamoud was arrested by security forces in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 17 November 2011 and is now being held incommunicado in conditions amounting to an enforced disappearance. He has not had access to relatives or lawyers and he could be at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Boqor Osman Mohamoud (also known as Buurmadow), aged about 45, is a traditional elder from the self-declared Republic of Somaliland in north western Somalia. Through his role as an elder, he has been involved in peace mediation in local conflicts in that region. He holds dual Somali and Ethiopian citizenship, and has the right to reside in the UAE, where his wife lives. He was arrested when he landed at Abu Dhabi airport in the UAE, on his return from a pilgrimage to the Muslim holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

Boqor Osman Mohamoud's relatives have not been informed of the reasons for his arrest, his location and whether he has been charged with any offence. They fear that he could be in very poor health, as he needs regular medication for conditions including diabetes and high blood pressure. Four days after his arrest he was brought back to his home in the UAE by six plainclothes officials thought to be members of the UAE security forces. The officials seized some files and his computer, but did not allow him to take any of his medication. It is not known whether he is receiving medication from those holding him. Relatives present at his home at the time were not allowed to speak to him or enquire about the reason for his arrest or his place of detention. His family has been unable to contact him and he has received no legal or consular support. In December 2011, Amnesty International wrote to the UAE authorities seeking clarification for the reasons for his arrest and urging that he be granted access to his family and a lawyer of his choice. No response has yet been received.

Please write immediately to the UAE authorities in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urging the UAE authorities to reveal the whereabouts of Boqor Osman Mohamoud (Buurmadow), and to disclose the reason for his arrest and his current legal status to his relatives;
- Calling on them to ensure that, while detained, he has access to the medication that he needs, and any other necessary medical care, as well as to a lawyer of his choice and his relatives;
- Calling for assurances that he is being protected from torture or other ill-treatment while in detention;
- Urging them to either charge Boqor Osman Mohamoud with an internationally recognizable criminal offence and try him in accordance with international fair trial standards or to release him immediately.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 FEBRUARY 2012 TO:

Vice-President and Prime Minister

Shaikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum
Office of the Prime Minister
POB 2838,
Dubai, UAE
Email via website:

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

Lt-General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al-Nahyan
Human Rights Directorate
POB: 398, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Fax: +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
Fax: +971 2 6810680

Salutation: Your Excellency

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.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Somaliland declared its independence from Somalia in 1991, following the collapse of Siad Barre's government. Somaliland's independence has to date not been recognized by any government or international body. The Republic of Somaliland has its own government and enjoys a degree of stability compared to South and Central Somalia, which has no functioning central government.

Boqor Osman Mohamoud (Buurmadow) is an elder. In Somalia, elders play an essential role in traditional governance structures, including in the implementation of customary law, local politics and in mediating conflicts.

There is a longstanding pattern in the UAE in which people arrested by *Amn al-Dawla* (State Security) officers are kept in solitary confinement and later face unfair trial. Amnesty International fears that the effective enforced disappearance of Boqor Osman Mohamoud fits this pattern.

For example, UAE national 'Abdullah Sultan al-Subaihat was arrested on 8 February 2007 by *Amn al-Dawla* (State Security) officers in the Emirate of 'Ajman where he lived. After months of incommunicado detention, he was tried unfairly, then convicted of "obtaining secret information on state security" and sentenced to a prison term. During a court session on 10 September 2007, he was said to have complained that he had been tortured while detained by *Amn al-Dawla* officials. He claimed that the torture methods they used included being beaten by a hosepipe all over his body, sleep deprivation, being forced to carry a chair on his head every day for two weeks, and threats of sexual assault. Amnesty International is not aware of any investigation ordered by the court into these torture allegations.

Sudanese businessman Al-Sadiq Sediq Adam Abdalla has been missing since November 2007. He had previously been arrested and held for two days in September 2007. The UAE authorities have never clarified his fate, despite queries from his family, the UN's Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and appeals from Amnesty International.

In August 2008, *Amn al-Dawla* officials arrested Naji Hamdan, a US citizen, at his home in the UAE. He was held incommunicado for three months at a secret location, then tried unfairly. Naji Hamdan was tortured and ill-treated in detention. On 15 June 2009, at his first appearance before the State Supreme Court, he declared that signed confessions being used as evidence against him were false and had only been signed as a result of the torture inflicted upon him. In November 2009, he was handed down a prison sentence equalling the time he had already served, and was deported the day after the verdict was delivered.

Although most individuals suspected of political offences in the UAE are held incommunicado in undisclosed locations after their arrest by *Amn al-Dawla*, a few political detainees have been allowed to make brief and limited phone calls to their families. Following their release or during their trials, some have spoken of the torture or other ill-treatment they have been subjected to.

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. Online discussion forums and political websites have been closed down or their access from the UAE blocked by the authorities. On 9 March 2011, over 130 civil and political rights activists in the UAE petitioned the President of the UAE to introduce universal, direct elections.

In April 2011 five UAE residents - the "UAE5" - were arrested. In June 2011, they were tried unfairly before the Supreme Court on criminal defamation charges relating to articles calling for political reform and others critical of some UAE government policies posted at an online forum. 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, while the other four received two year prison sentences. 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.

Name: Boqor Osman Mohamoud (Buurmadow)
Gender m/f: m

UA: 2/12 Index: MDE 25/001/2012 Issue Date: 5 January 2012

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