

URGENT ACTION

MEN FACING MASS TRIAL AFTER SECRET DETENTION

A mass trial of 41 men began on 24 August in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE). At least 21 had been held in secret detention facilities without access to their families or lawyers for 20 months before trial. They may have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated.

A group of 41 men, 39 of whom are UAE nationals, are facing trial before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court in Abu Dhabi. At least 21 of them, many of whom are related to each other, were arrested between 20 November and 7 December 2013 by the UAE's State Security body and taken into secret detention facilities. None of the 21 men had any access to the outside world, including their families or lawyers, for 20 months after their arrest. Individuals subjected to enforced disappearance in the UAE are sometimes tortured or otherwise ill-treated. In July 2015, some of the men were transferred to al-Razeen Prison and al-Wathba Prison in Abu Dhabi.

The defendants face terrorism-related charges, including establishing a group called the Shabab Al Manarah (Minaret Youth group) in order to overthrow the UAE government and replace it with an "ISIL-style caliphate" and "endangering the security and safety and the lives of people, including the leadership of the country." Many of them did not have a lawyer to represent them at both the first trial session on 24 August and at the second session on 28 September and have yet to see their case files. State media reports of the trial suggest that some of the defendants may still be held in secret detention facilities as they record that the defendants asked the court to move them to "official" prisons. Some of the men also have health problems and told the court they are in need of medical treatment. The next trial session has been set for 26 October. The 41 men are being tried under several different laws, including the 2004 counterterror law. Three of the defendants are being tried in their absence.

All trials held before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court are inherently unfair because, even though it is a court of first instance, there is no right of appeal, meaning that anyone wrongfully convicted has no judicial means of remedy.

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

- Calling on the UAE authorities to try the men before an ordinary criminal court in accordance with international fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty;
- Calling on them to ensure that any "confessions" or other statements obtained by torture and other ill-treatment or coercion are not used as evidence against them in court;
- Urging them to protect the men from torture and other ill-treatment, provide them with immediate and regular access to their families and lawyers of their choice, and to any medical attention they may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 NOVEMBER 2015 TO:

Minister of Justice
Dr Hadeef bin Jua'an Al Dhaheri
Ministry of Justice – Abu Dhabi
Al Khubirah, Sector 93
Street 5
PO Box 260
Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
Salutation: Your Excellency

Vice-President and Prime Minister
HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin
Rashid al-Maktoum
Prime Minister's Office
PO Box: 212000
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Fax: + +971 4 330 4044
Email: info@primeminister.ae
Twitter: @HHShkMohd
Salutation: Your Highness

And copies to:
Minister of Interior
Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al
Nahyan
Zayed Sport City, Arab Gulf Street, Near
to Shaikh Zayed Mosque
Abu Dhabi POB: 398
United Arab Emirates
Fax: +971 2 441 4938 / +971 2 402 2762
+971 2 441 5780

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
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Many of the 41 men on trial in the Minaret Youth group case are related. Khalid Kalantar and his four sons Abdullah, Abulrahman, Othman, and Mohammed were arrested between 20 November and 2 December 2013. Ali Salim al-Boloushi, a medical student at UAE University, was arrested on 6 December 2013 at 9.30 pm while going to buy bread for the family dinner. His uncle, Ahmed Abdulrahman Nawab al-Boloushi, had been arrested by State Security officers at 1.30 am on 4 December 2013 at the emergency room of a hospital where his father was a patient. He was then taken to his house, which was searched. Their relative Jumaa Abdulrahman Murad al-Boloushi had been arrested on 3 December 2013 at a hospital where his son was being treated.

One of the defendants is a Syrian national and another is from the UAE's stateless Bidun minority who has a passport from the Comoros Islands (an agreement between the UAE and the government of the Comoros Islands allows the stateless Bidun minority who are not granted UAE citizenship to obtain Comoros citizenship instead).

State Security officials in the UAE have arrested several hundred people since 2011, including foreign nationals, and subjected them to enforced disappearance, holding them incommunicado in secret locations without any access to the outside world, including lawyers and their families. Some individuals previously subjected to enforced disappearance have said they were tortured or otherwise ill-treated and were forced to make "confessions" during interrogations without the presence of a lawyer. The State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court often allows the use of such "confessions," in contravention of international human rights law, and convicts defendants even when they have repudiated them.

Trials held before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court's proceedings do not meet international fair trial standards. Its judges are appointed by executive decree and they are neither independent nor impartial when trying cases generally brought under broad and sweeping national security provisions in the Penal Code or the cybercrimes or counter-terrorism laws. This court raises particular concern because its judgements cannot be appealed to a higher court, as international human rights law requires, so defendants who are wrongly convicted have no judicial means of remedy.

Although the UAE government has told Amnesty International that the independence of the judiciary is guaranteed under the Constitution, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers in 2014 said the UAE's entire judicial system is "under the de facto control of the executive branch of government." She described this as an "important challenge for the independence and impartiality of the judiciary."

The right to communicate and receive visits are also fundamental safeguards against human rights violations, including torture or other ill-treatment and enforced disappearance. They affect the ability of an accused to prepare their defence and are required to protect the right to private and family life and the right to health. International human rights law also requires that detainees should have access to a lawyer from the start of their detention, including during questioning.

Name: Khalid Kalantar, Abdullah Kalantar, Abulrahman Kalantar, Othman Kalantar, Mohammed Kalantar, Ali Salim al-Boloushi, Ahmed Abdulrahman Nawab al-Boloushi, Ali Miran al-Boloushi, Ali Abdullah al-Boloushi, Jumaa Abdulrahman Murad al-Boloushi, Mohammed Hassan al-Boloushi, Mohammed Abdullah al-Raesi, Khalil Saeed al-Shimili, Mohammed Youssef Ahli, Abdulrahman al-Marzouqi (aka Abdulrahman Dal), Abdulrahman al-Marzouqi (aka Abdulrahman Saket), Nayef al-Mulla, Suhail al-Marri, Mansour al-Naqbi, Ahmed Hassan al-Hammadi, Abdulaziz Ahmed al-Jasmi and 20 others.

Gender m/f: m

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