

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

21 March 2016

AI Index Number: MDE 25/3719/2016

### **United Arab Emirates (UAE): End arbitrary and politically-motivated stripping of nationality**

Amnesty International today called on the UAE authorities to restore the nationality of those whose citizenship the government has stripped following arbitrary, administrative processes without the right to challenge the decision, and to stop the harassment of family members of people suspected or convicted of offences in the UAE, including those detained for criticizing the government.

On 7 March 2016, an official at the Federal Migration Department in Sharjah summoned Asma (29), Do'a (25) and Omar (23) al-Siddiq to the department. They were instructed to bring their state-issued documents, including passport, identity card, family certificate, medical card and driving license. The official re-assured them that there was no problem, insisting that they were being asked to bring the document "for their own benefit and interest".

The following day the same official informed them that their citizenship had been revoked. The official stated that the Migration Department was implementing a decision made by way of a presidential decree which they were not allowed to see. The official added that they "should look for a new nationality".

The two sisters and their brother are the children of Mohammed Abdulraziq al-Siddiq, whose citizenship the government revoked in 2012, after he signed a petition calling for greater transparency in governance in the UAE. The government claimed that he, along with five others, posed a "threat to national security".

The authorities detained Mohammed Abdulraziq al-Siddiq in April 2013 after he refused to sign a declaration to seek a new nationality within two weeks or face prison. In July 2013, the State Security Chamber of the UAE's Federal Supreme Court sentenced him to 10 years' imprisonment following a mass trial known as the "[UAE 94](#)" for the 94 individuals tried.

The "UAE 94" mass trial was grossly unfair: the court accepted evidence that consisted of "confessions"; and it did not investigate claims of coercion during the prolonged, pre-trial detention, when scores were held incommunicado and in secret locations.

In recent years, the UAE government has reportedly stripped hundreds of their citizenship, apparently citing 'national security'.

Without official documents, the three Emiratis will be prohibited from working in the state sector, attending state and many private educational establishments; they will not be able to access any new health care whether state or privately provided and will be unable to renew other forms of identification, such as drivers' licenses. They are unlikely to gain permission to visit their father in Abu Dhabi's al-Razeen prison, where access is contingent on a valid form of identification.

Article 8 of the UAE Constitution states that citizens shall have a single nationality fixed by law and that they shall enjoy the protection of the "government in accordance with the international principles in effect." However, it qualifies this by stipulating that the authorities may withdraw a person's UAE nationality in "exceptional circumstances provided for in the law."

Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of nationality. The right to a nationality is also provided for in Article 5 of the International

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), to which the UAE is a state party.

Deprivation of nationality as punishment for an individual's exercise of the right to freedom of expression, including peaceful political opposition activities, and is arbitrary and prohibited under international law. And stripping the citizenship of an individual, on any grounds, without due process protections is arbitrary.

In July 2012, the UN Human Rights Council in Resolution 20/5 called upon all states "to refrain from taking discriminatory measures and from enacting or maintaining legislation that would arbitrarily deprive persons of their nationality on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, especially if such measures and legislation render a person stateless".

Amnesty International reminds the Government of the UAE of the pledges and commitments it made as a candidate for membership of the United Nations Human Rights Council to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms. The organization calls on the UAE to withdraw its revocation of the citizenship of Asma, Do'a and Omar al-Siddiq and return any state-issued papers the authorities may have retained. The government should end the practice of arbitrarily stripping citizenship and initiate a review of existing legislation relating to citizenship to ensure that it is in line with international standards.

ENDS

Public Document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566 or email: [press@amnesty.org](mailto:press@amnesty.org)

International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK  
[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)