

# URGENT ACTION

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE IN CRITICAL CONDITION

The physical and psychological conditions of human rights defender and prisoner of conscience Ahmed Mansoor has significantly deteriorated, following four months of him being on continuous hunger strike to protest his detention conditions. He is no longer able to walk unattended. He has been detained in dire conditions and in solitary confinement since his arrest on 20 March 2017.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

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Your Excellency

According to information recently obtained by Amnesty International, the psychological and physical conditions of human rights defender and prisoner of conscience **Ahmed Mansoor** have deteriorated to the point that he is no longer able to walk unattended. On 7 September 2019, after [prison guards beat him](#), Ahmed Mansoor began a hunger strike to protest his prison conditions. During the first week of his hunger strike, prison guards forced him to eat, but between 14 September 2019 and at least mid-January 2020, Ahmed Mansoor was on continuous hunger strike, ingesting only fluids.

Ahmed has been held in solitary confinement since the beginning of his detention on 20 March 2017. The UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) prohibits the use of prolonged solitary confinement (for a period of more than 15 days) as punishments that amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

On 1 January 2020, the official state-run news website, the [Emirates News Agency](#), stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation refuted the claims made by non-governmental organizations related to Ahmed Mansoor's case, namely that his trial and subsequent conviction were unfair, and calling them "baseless". Amnesty International believes that Ahmed Mansoor's trial was unfair as he has been convicted and sentenced solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association, including through his human rights work.

**I urge you to quash Ahmed Mansoor's conviction and release him immediately and unconditionally. Pending his release, I call on you to ensure that he is detained in conditions that comply with international standards, that he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment; and has immediate and regular access to his family and any health care he may require. I also call on the UAE authorities to grant independent international monitors access to Ahmed Mansoor in prison.**

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmed Mansoor was arrested on 20 March 2017, at his home in the emirate of Ajman in the UAE. His trial started a year later before the State Security Chamber of the Federal Appeal Court. On 29 May 2018, he was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and a fine of 1,000,000 Emirati Dirhams (around USD \$270,000). The court also ordered that he be placed under surveillance for three years after his release. He was convicted on charges including "insulting the status and prestige of the UAE and its symbols", including its leaders, "publish[ing] false information to damage [the] UAE's reputation abroad" and "portray[ing] the UAE as a lawless land." He was also charged with "cooperating with a terrorist organisation operating outside the country" but was acquitted of this charge on 31 December 2018. Since his arrest, Ahmed Mansoor has been held in solitary confinement.

On 17 March 2019, Ahmed Mansoor went on hunger strike to protest his detention conditions in Sadr prison in Abu Dhabi, as well as his unfair trial. He ended his hunger strike in mid-April after the authorities promised to address his demands relating to his detention conditions. He was then allowed a few more family visits and was granted a phone call to his mother.

On 7 May 2019, seven UN experts condemned Ahmed's prison conditions and called for him to receive medical treatment, for his detention conditions to be improved and for his retrial "in accordance with the fundamental judicial guarantees provided for in international human rights law, or his immediate release."

Ahmed Mansoor went on a second hunger strike on 7 September 2019 after prison guards beat him. For the first week of his hunger strike, prison guards forced him to eat. However, since 14 September, Ahmed carried on with his hunger strike, ingesting only fluids. Ahmed Mansoor continues to be denied a mattress, access to books, as well as regular visits to an outdoor yard to exercise and be exposed to sunlight. Since the beginning of his detention in March 2017, save for rare family visits, Ahmed Mansoor has been held in solitary confinement and the only improvement to his prison conditions is that running water in the isolation ward was made available in October 2019.

Ahmed Mansoor is a blogger, a poet and a human rights defender who received the prestigious Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders in 2015. He is a member of the advisory committee of the NGO Human Rights Watch's Middle East and North Africa Division, as well as of the advisory board of the organization Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR). He has documented the human rights situation in the UAE since 2006 and has publicly spoken out in defence of human rights on his blog, via social media and in interviews with international media. Ahmed Mansoor is a long standing and trusted friend of Amnesty International and other human rights organizations.

Amnesty International has worked very closely with Ahmed Mansoor over the years. Up until his arrest, he was one of the only independent voices still brave enough to speak out against human rights violations from inside the country.

### **PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Arabic and English

You can also write in your own language.

### **PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 25 March 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

### **NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Ahmed Mansour (he/his)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde25/1590/2019/en/>