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JOINT PUBLIC STATEMENT

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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AHMED MANSOOR REMAINS HELD IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FIVE AND HALF YEARS ON

Amnesty International and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) urgently appeal to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to grant access to independent international experts such as the UN Special Rapporteurs, international NGOs and EU Delegation and EU missions in Abu Dhabi to visit **Ahmed Mansoor** in prison to monitor his condition. We continue to call for his immediate and unconditional release.

Mansoor, recipient of the 2015 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders, is a member of GCHR's advisory board and member of the Human Rights Watch advisory committee of the Middle East and North Africa division. He was arrested on 20 March 2017 and sentenced to 10 years in prison in May 2018 after being unfairly convicted of the offence of "insulting the status and prestige of the UAE and its symbols including its leaders" in reprisal for his peaceful human rights activism, including through his posts on social media.

Since his arrest five and half years ago, Mansoor has been held in solitary confinement in al-Sadr prison in Abu Dhabi, where he is being denied a bed, mattress or pillow, as well as being deprived of adequate medical care, exercise and sunshine, which puts his life at risk. Reliable local sources confirmed that his health continues to deteriorate, and he suffers from high blood pressure and general fatigue.

His treatment and conditions of detention are in flagrant violation of the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, also known as the "Nelson Mandela Rules", clarify that the use of prolonged solitary confinement (for a time period of more than 15 days) as a punishment amounts to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Furthermore, the UAE authorities are in violation of their obligations under the United Nations Convention Against Torture (CAT) and Principle 6 of the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, as well as Article 2 of the UAE's Code of Criminal Procedure.

Despite repeated calls by human rights organisations and international mechanisms over the past years, the UAE authorities have not allowed international experts or independent monitors access to Ahmed Mansoor in prison. Such visits would, at least, provide independent verification of his true situation, and pending his release, could lead to improving his prison conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UAE AUTHORITIES:

Amnesty International and GCHR call on the UAE government to:

1. Allow urgently and without delay independent international experts such as the UN Special Rapporteurs and international NGOs to visit Ahmed Mansoor in prison to monitor and verify his condition.
2. Quash Ahmed Mansoor's conviction and release him immediately and unconditionally.
3. Pending his release, to ensure that Ahmed Mansoor is detained in conditions that comply with international standards, including that he is transferred to a general prison ward and has regular access to fresh air and sunshine; that he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment; and that he receives any health care he may require.