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## Urgent Appeal for Justice: Condemning the Unjust Prosecution of Dozens of Emiratis in the UAE

We, the undersigned human rights organizations, are deeply concerned by the new prosecutions brought by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) authorities against more than 80 Emiratis, some of whom are human rights defenders, for allegedly establishing and supporting a “terrorist organization.” The charges are in retaliation to the defendants’ real or suspected connection to the Justice and Dignity Committee, a group formed in 2010-2011 that, in the words of the authorities’ 2012 indictment, “undertook to raise society’s awareness of its rights,” “published articles about those rights,” and “worked to communicate with international rights organizations.”

Prosecuting these individuals for peaceful advocacy of human rights, while many of them have already been [arbitrarily](#) detained for years on similar charges, is a shameful act that reaffirms the UAE authorities desire to continue punishing and intimidating any potential critics into silence. Among those who have been confirmed so far and are not in exile, are defendants who have been detained for years, most of whom finished their sentences long ago but remain arbitrarily detained.

Included in the new mass trial are prominent human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor and academic Dr. Nasser Bin Ghaith, who were both convicted during separate trials in 2018 and 2017 respectively, on charges related to their human rights activities online and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The remaining accused were previously convicted in a mass trial, the "UAE 94" case of 2012-2013, on the same charge – involvement with the Justice and Dignity Committee – that they face now. Therefore, these new charges are illegal and constitute a violation of [Article 19](#) of the Arab Charter on Human Rights, which states that “no one may be tried twice for the same offence. Anyone against whom such proceedings are brought shall have the right to challenge their legality and to demand his release.”

In addition, we emphasize that the trial proceedings are being conducted in secrecy, as the UAE authorities have not issued any public documents on the trial. The information that has been acquired reveals disturbing details of the trial proceedings, including the denial of the defendants’ right to appoint independent lawyers and the refusal to allow the families of the defendants to be present in the courtroom. During the trial hearings, authorities reportedly placed the families in a separate room to observe the proceedings on a screen; and at the second hearing, the sound was cut off, preventing the families from knowing what was actually happening, illustrating the authorities’ disregard for the right to a fair trial.

Adding to the cruelty, some families reported receiving calls to tell them their relatives were finally going to be released or “to expect good news”, giving them false hope and making the news of the new trial even more of a shock.

As human rights organizations, we condemn the UAE authorities’ use of the criminal justice system as a tool to keep these individuals behind bars and suppress peaceful criticism or calls for reform. We stress the importance of international action to protect human rights and uphold universal standards of justice, due process, and a fair trial.

We call on the UN Special Procedures, UN member states, the European Union, and other regional institutions to urge the UAE to drop these additional politically motivated charges and immediately release all arbitrarily detained individuals.

### Signatories

1. Amnesty International
2. Access Now
3. ALQST for Human Rights



4. Africa Center for Energy and Environmental Sustainability (ACEES)
5. Association Jeunes Agriculteurs (AJA)
6. AGIR POUR LA SÉCURITÉ ET LA SOUVERAINETE ALIMENTAIRE ASSA
7. Bargny coast waterkeeper
8. Climate Activist Defenders
9. Centre for Environment, Human Rights & Development Forum - CEHRDF
10. CADTM International Network
11. Center for Rights and Democracy CRD South Sudan
12. Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg
13. Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)
14. Emirates Detainees Advocacy Center (EDAC)
15. Equidem
16. Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria
17. FairSquare
18. Friends of the Earth US
19. FEMAPO
20. Forum for Protection of Public Interest (Pro Public)
21. Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
22. Green Media Initiatives(GMI)
23. Human Rights Sentinel
24. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
25. IFEX
26. Innovation pour le Développement et la Protection de l'environnement
27. Int'l. Campaign For Freedom in the UAE
28. Les Amis de la Terre-Togo
29. MENA Rights Group
30. Misère Option Zéro
31. Migrant Workers Voice
32. OT Watch and Rivers without Boundaries Mongolia
33. Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)
34. PEN International
35. ReThinking Foreign Policy
36. Rights Realization Centre
37. Salam for Democracy and Human Rights
38. The Freedom Initiative
39. TRAFFED-RDC



مركز مناصرة معتقلي الإمارات  
Emirates Detainees Advocacy Center



40. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
41. Western New York Peace Center
42. Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition