

URGENT ACTION

MASS TRIAL ENDS AMID SERIOUS FAIR TRIAL CONCERNS

The mass trial of 41 men ended in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), on 27 March with 34 of them receiving sentences ranging between three years and life imprisonment. Three of those sentenced were under the age of 18 at the time of their arrests. Seven others were acquitted.

The trial of **41 men**, including 37 UAE nationals, two Iranians, one Syrian and one Comorian before the State Security Chamber at the Federal Supreme Court, ended on 27 March. They were convicted of terrorism-related charges, including establishing a group called the *Shabab al-Manara* (Minaret Youth Group) in order to overthrow the UAE government and replace it with an "ISIL-style caliphate" and smuggling weapons, ammunition and explosives into the UAE with the aim of "endangering the security and safety and the lives of people, including the leadership of the country". The court sentenced eleven men, including one who was a juvenile at the time of his arrest and two men in their absence, to life imprisonment. The rest of the group received varying lengths of sentence: two men were sentenced to 15 years in jail; thirteen men to 10 years; two men, who were under the age of 18 at the time of their arrest, were jailed for five years; and seven men were sentenced to three years. The court also acquitted seven men. The four foreign nationals will also be deported after they serve their sentences. Those convicted have no right to appeal their sentences.

At least 21 of the group were arrested between 20 November and 7 December 2013 by the UAE's State Security body and held in secret detention facilities. None had any access to the outside world, including their families or lawyers, for 20 months after their arrest. In July 2015, some of them were transferred to al-Razeen Prison and al-Wathba Prison in Abu Dhabi. The trial of the 41 began on 24 August 2015. During the trial one of the men's lawyers stated that the written confessions presented to the court were too similar, suggesting that they were fake. The Prosecution showed in court video footage of the men "confessing" to the charges brought against them.

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

- Calling on the UAE authorities to ensure the convictions of the 34 men are quashed and to order a retrial before an ordinary criminal court in accordance with international fair trial standards, including the right to appeal, and without recourse to the death penalty; adding that those under 18 at the time of arrests should be retried in a court abiding by international standards of juvenile justice;
- Calling on them to ensure that any "confessions" obtained by torture and other ill-treatment are not used as evidence in court and that the men are protected from any further ill-treatment; and calling on them to order an independent and impartial investigation into the allegations of torture, in line with the Istanbul protocol.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 MAY 2016 TO:

Vice-President and Prime Minister

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
<http://uaepm.ae/English/Pages/ContactUs.aspx>
Twitter: @HSHkMoh
Salutation: Your Highness

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
Fax: +971 2 4414938
+971 2 4022762
+971 2 4415780
Email: moi@moi.gov.ae
Twitter: @SaifBZayed
Salutation: Your Highness

And copies to:

Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Crown Prince Court
King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz
Al Saud Street,
P.O. Box: 124
Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
Fax: +971 2 668 6622
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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. This is the first update of UA 218/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde25/2594/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Many of the 41 men on trial in the al-Manara 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 9.30pm 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. On 27 March 2016, Khalid Kalantar and his two sons, Othman and Abdullah Kalantar were sentenced to life imprisonment. Another of his sons, Abdulrahman was sentenced to 10 years in jail, while Ali Salim al-Boloushi, Ahmed Abdulrahman Nawab al-Boloushi and Jumaa Abdulrahman Murad al-Boloushi were among seven men to be acquitted.

The Comorian national is from the UAE's stateless Bidun minority and holds 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). Two of the four foreign nationals were sentenced to life imprisonment and two to 10 years in jail. They will all be deported after they have served their sentences.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified by the UAE in 1997, is a legally binding treaty. It defines a child as anyone below the age of 18. However, UAE law is unclear on the age at which people are considered children. The 1976 Juvenile Law defines a child as someone not exceeding 15 years of age, whereas Article 63 of the Penal Code states that anyone above the age of 7 and under 18 should be treated under specific legal regulations relating to juveniles.

State Security officials in the UAE have arrested several hundred people since 2011, including foreign nationals, and subjected them to enforced disappearance, holding them in incommunicado and secret detention. 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."

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: all male.

Further information on UA: 218/15 Index: MDE 25/3753/2016 Issue Date: 1 April 2016