

URGENT ACTION

'UAE FIVE' PARDONED BY PRESIDENT

Five activists in the UAE known as the 'UAE5', have been pardoned by the President of the UAE. They were sentenced on 27 November for publicly insulting the president and other top officials, but were pardoned the following day. Amnesty International will continue to call for their records to be cleared.

Ahmed Mansoor, Nasser bin Ghaith, Fahad Salim Dalk, Hassan Ali al-Khamis and Ahmed Abdul Khaleq were sentenced following a grossly unfair trial on 27 November 2011. The Federal Supreme court in Abu Dhabi sentenced Nasser bin Ghaith, Fahad Salim Dalk, Hassan Ali al-Khamis and Ahmed Abdul Khaleq to two years' imprisonment for defamation, while Ahmed Mansoor was sentenced to three years imprisonment. The following day, the UAE President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, commuted the sentences and the five men were released.

The five men were arrested in the UAE in April 2011. In June they were charged under article 176 of the Penal Code, for 'publicly insulting' the UAE President, Vice-President, and the Crown Prince in relation to posts published in an online discussion forum blocked by the authorities since 2010. The charges against the five men have not been dropped and their criminal records might make it difficult for them to keep the jobs they had prior to their arrest in April 2011, find another job or travel abroad. Amnesty International, who adopted the men as prisoners of conscience, is asking for the men's criminal record to be cleared as they should not have been prosecuted in the first place for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression.

Some of the men, members of their families and their legal team have been the target of an ongoing smear campaign. Since their arrest, they have faced threats and intimidation and the authorities have failed to investigate or prosecute anyone responsible for these threats. On 27 November, the day the five men were sentenced, a pro-government supporter standing outside the court assaulted a relative of one of the detainees and shouted threats and obscenities after the verdict was announced. Amnesty International holds the UAE authorities responsible for the safety of the five men, their families and their legal team.

No further appeals from the UA network are required at present. The team will continue to monitor the situation. Many thanks to all those who took action.

This is the fourth update of UA 111/11. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE25/009/2011/en>

Names: Ahmed Mansoor, Nasser bin Ghaith, Fahad Salim Dalk, Hassan Ali al-Khamis and Ahmed Abdul Khaleq
Gender m/f: all male

Further information on UA: 111/11 Index: MDE 25/011/2011 Issue Date: 14 December 2011