



MENA
Rights
Group

Intimidation and reprisals for cooperation with the UN

Submission to the Secretary-General

Report submitted to the Secretary-General in the context of the preparation of the annual report on intimidation and reprisals for cooperation with the UN in the field of human rights

16 April 2021

Introduction

The present submission provides information on several individuals who were subjected to continued acts of reprisals – between 1 May 2020 and 16 April 2021 – in Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The cases included in this report are only ones for which we have direct contact with the victims and/or their relatives, and who have all given their consent to be featured in this submission and have their case raised by the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) in his annual report.

Cases of reprisals

1.1 Djibouti

The case of Mr Kadar Abdi Ibrahim was included in the 2018, 2019, and 2020 reports of the UNSG (A/HRC/39/41; A/HRC/42/30; A/HRC/45/36).

Mr Kadar is a Djibouti-based human rights defender and journalist. Between 9 and 12 April 2018, Mr Kadar travelled to Geneva to carry out advocacy activities ahead of Djibouti's third Universal Period Review (UPR). Notably, he presented the recommendations included in a joint Defend-Defenders/CIVICUS/FIDH report and took part in a pre-session meeting organised by the NGO UPR Info on 10 April. During his stay, he also met with representatives of a dozen States as well as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. On 15 April 2018, just two days after coming back from Geneva, he was briefly detained and had his passport confiscated by eight members of the Information and Security Service (SDS), Djibouti's secret service, who raided his home.¹ Although he was released shortly after his arrest, he was unable to retrieve his passport, preventing him from leaving the country. He was therefore unable to participate in the review of Djibouti by the Working Group on the UPR, held on 10 May 2018. On 2 September 2018, he sought the assistance of the Mediator of the Republic and the president of the National Council for Human Rights, to no avail. During that same period, he also sent letters to the head of the SDS as well as Djibouti's public prosecutor.

Update

Mr Kadar Abdi Ibrahim's passport is still retained at the SDS headquarters, preventing him from leaving the country and carrying out his human rights activities.

1.2 Egypt

1.2.1 Ebrahim Abdelmonem Metwally Hegazy

The case of Mr Ebrahim Abdelmonem Metwally Hegazy was included in the 2018, 2019 and 2020 reports of the UNSG (A/HRC/39/41; A/HRC/42/30; A/HRC/45/36).

¹ For more information : Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme, *Djibouti: Reprisals against human rights defender Kadar Abdi Ibrahim upon his return from an advocacy mission in Geneva*, 18 April 2018, <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/djibouti-reprisals-against-human-rights-defender-kadar-abdi-ibrahim> (accessed 27 April 2020).

Mr Ebrahim Abdelmonem Metwally Hegazy is a human rights lawyer and the co-founder and coordinator of the Association of the Families of the Disappeared. On 10 September 2017, he was arrested while *en route* to Switzerland to discuss enforced disappearances with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID). Since then, he has been held in pre-trial detention under the practice of rotation, despite having been cleared of all the charges brought against him by the Cairo Criminal Court on 14 October 2019. He is currently held in Scorpion Prison, located inside Cairo's Tora Prison 992 Maximum-Security.

Update

On 26 August 2020, the Criminal Court of Cairo renewed the order to release Mr Hegazy under precautionary measures in Case No. 1470 of 2019 (in which he was charged with "joining a terrorist group" and "funding terrorism"). The nature of the precautionary measures are unknown.

Despite the August 26 release decision, Mr Hegazy was kept in detention until new charges were brought against him on 6 September 2020, which was manifestly a way to keep him under preventive detention.

On 6 September 2020, the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) reported that Mr Metwally was investigated by the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) in Case No. 786 of 2020 and charged with "leading a terror group", which the Egyptian authorities have accused him of having formed during his transfers to and from the prosecution for pre-trial renewals.

These new charges have been used to justify a renewed order for Mr Metwally to be kept under preventive detention and to avoid exceeding the permissible maximum pre-trial detention time allowed for felonies punishable by death or life imprisonment according to article 143 of Egypt's Code of Criminal Procedure.

Mr Hegazy is also still facing charges of "founding and leading a group established in contravention of the provisions of the law", "publishing and spreading false news", and "communicating with foreign entities in order to undermine national security" (Case No. 900 of 2017).

On 27 November 2020, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) granted its 2020 Human Rights Award to Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy and six Egyptian lawyers who are currently in pre-trial detention for a number of different charges that are linked to their human rights activities.

Recently, he has been allowed family visits and to receive medication.

1.2.2 Ahmed Shawky Abdelsattar Mohamed Amasha

The case of Dr Ahmed Shawky Abdelsattar Mohamed Amasha was included in the 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 reports of the UNSG (A/HRC/36/31; A/HRC/39/41; A/HRC/42/30; A/HRC/45/36).

Dr Amasha is a veterinarian and human rights defender, who helped the families of those forcibly disappeared and arbitrarily detained in Egypt both at a domestic and

international level, including by submitting cases to the WGEID. He is the co-founder of the League for the Families of the Disappeared and a member of the “Kefaya” opposition group and a trade unionist. His current location of detention is unknown.

As described in detail in the previous reports submitted to the Secretary-General by MENA Rights Group, Dr Amasha has long been targeted by the Egyptian authorities. In March 2017 he was forcibly disappeared and tortured and subsequently held in pre-trial detention until 4 October 2019, when he was released from prison under probation.

Update

At the end of May 2020, several police forces raided Dr Amasha’s family house and inspected his mother’s mobile phone. The police officers also repeatedly asked his family about his whereabouts.

On 17 June 2020, Dr Amasha was arrested from his home and once again disappeared. The police raided his home and confiscated his phone. His family did not know where he had been taken.

On 12 July 2020, after 25 days of enforced disappearance, he reappeared at the office of the SSSP and was investigated in yet another case, Case No. 1360 of 2019, on the charge of “joining a terrorist group”. He was then taken to an unknown location. Dr Amasha remained missing despite the lodging of formal complaints by his lawyer and family with the Public Prosecutor and the Minister of Interior to report on his arrest and enforced disappearance and to request that the necessary measures to disclose his location and to release him are taken.

On 7 December 2020, Dr Amasha was seen in a glass cell from far away, along with around 250 further detainees, by his lawyer in Tora Maximum Security Prison 2 (also known as “Aqrab 2”). While Dr Amasha is summoned to the Prosecution every 15 days, the latter extends his detention in his absence.

Dr Amasha’s health has deteriorated since his arrest in 2017. His family does not know if he receives the medical care and medication necessary.

1.3 Iraq

1.3.1 Jasib Hattab Abboud Al Heliji

Jasib Hattab Abboud Al Heliji is the father of Ali Jaseb Hattab Al Heliji, a human rights lawyer representing demonstrators arrested in connection with 2019 anti-government demonstrations, who is forcibly disappeared since 8 October 2019. He was allegedly abducted by a militia affiliated with the Popular Mobilisation Units (PMU). Since then, Jasib Hattab Abboud Al Heliji had been advocating for justice for his son’s disappearance, including filing a court case naming the militia and individuals allegedly involved.

As part of his effort to locate his son, Jasib mandated Amnesty International and MENA Rights Group to submit an Urgent Action before the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances on 23 October 2019. The disappearance of Ali Jaseb Hattab Al Heliji was raised by several UN Special Procedures sent a letter (UA IRQ 6/2020) to the Iraqi

authorities requesting clarifications on Al Heliji's case. The Iraqi authorities have so far failed to respond to all communications presented to them by the UN.

Update

On 10 March 2021, while Jaseb Hattab Al Heliji was returning to his home in Amarah, from the funeral of an Iraqi activist who was recently killed, he was stopped and shot in the head by unidentified armed men prompting the Special Procedures to issue a press release to condemn his assassination.²

1.3.2 Members of Al Wissam Humanitarian Assembly: Imad Al Tamimi, Israa Al Tamimi, Riyadh Al Karawi

The case of Mr Imad Amara was included in the UNSG's reports in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2020 (A/HRC/33/19; A/HRC/36/31; A/HRC/39/41; A/HRC/42/30). The cases of Mr Imad Al Tamimi, Ms Israa Al Dujaili, and Mr Riyadh Al Karawi were included in the UNSG's reports in 2019 (A/HRC/42/30). Lastly, the case of Faisal Al Tamimi was included in the UNSG's reports in 2016, 2017 and 2018 (A/HRC/42/30; A/HRC/36/31; A/HRC/39/41).

Mr Imad Amara, Mr Faisal Al Tamimi, Mr Imad Al Tamimi, Ms Israa Al Dujaili, and Mr Riad Al Karawi and are all members of Al Wissam Humanitarian Assembly, an Iraqi human rights non-governmental organisation which works on documenting cases of enforced disappearances and filing them with the UN human rights mechanisms. They have all faced intimidation tactics and threats by Iraqi security forces and armed groups in response to their documentation work.

In 2016, Mr Amara and Mr Faisal Al Tamimi were abducted by Iraqi security forces.

In 2018, armed gunmen shot Mr Faisal Al Tamimi's car in an attempt to assassinate him after he attended a conference calling on Iraq to join to the International Criminal Court.

That same year, Mr Imad Al Tamimi was abducted, forcibly disappeared and tortured by members of the Iraqi SWAT team, after attending a protest in Baghdad.

Ms Al Dujaili and Mr Al Karawi have been verbally assaulted and threatened several times in connection to their work on enforced disappearances in Iraq. In 2018, Mr Al Karawi left Iraq for security reasons.

Update

As a result of the continuous threats and intimidation he was facing, Imad Amara left his work at Al Wissam and cut off all communication with his colleagues.

Last May, Faisal Al Tamimi fled abroad where he was once again harassed and subject to intimidations by Iraqi groups, which were allied to political parties in Iraq. In Europe, he organised protests in response to the arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances of Iraqi protestors, Al Tamimi and his family were subject to

² The press release is available at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/FR/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=26951&LangID=F>
(accessed on 15 April 2021).

intimidation tactics and were threatened to have their son, who currently resides in Iraq, disappeared.

Imad Al Tamimi, since his release and until this moment, has not left his place of residence as he suffers from panic attacks and PTSD.

Israa Al Dujaili continues to face pressure, death threats and attacks on social media from members and supporters of Iraqi militias and certain political parties

Riad Al Karawi has sought asylum abroad.

1.4 Saudi Arabia

1.4.1 Mohammad Fahad Al Qahtani

The case of Mohammad Fahad Al Qahtani was included in the 2012, 2013, 2019 and 2020 reports of the UNSG (A/HRC/21/18; A/HRC/24/29; A/HRC/40/30; A/HRC/45/36).

Mohammad Fahad Al Qahtani, lawyer and co-founder of the Saudi Association for Civil and Political Rights (ACPRA), was sentenced on 9 March 2013 by the Criminal Court in Riyadh to 10 years of imprisonment and a 10-year travel ban for several charges including “accusing the judicial and legal system of lack of independence and questioning their integrity”; “antagonising the international organisations against the Saudi government by disseminating false information”; and “using the Internet to disseminate opinions, petitions, and statements against the government.”

Update

Between 19 and 30 December 2020, Mr Al Qahtani carried out another hunger strike in prison, in protest of being denied family contact, access to books and essential medication. He had ended his previous hunger strike after the authorities said they will meet his demands.

Between 6 and 14 March 2021, Mr Al Qahtani and more than 30 other prisoners of conscience undertook another hunger strike in protest of the harassment they were facing in Al Ha’ir Prison in Riyadh. This included being held in the same ward as psychiatric detainees, some of whom had been violent towards them, and being denied family contact and access to books and newspapers. They ended the hunger strike after the authorities said they will meet the prisoner’s demands.

In April 2021, Mr Al Qahtani tested positive for COVID-19, as other cases were spreading in Al Ha’ir Prison. He has been denied any contact with the outside world since 7 April 2021, until the time of writing (14 April).

1.4.2 Essa Al Nukheifi

The case of Mr Essa Al Nukheifi was included in the 2018, 2019 and 2020 reports of the UNSG (A/HRC/39/41; A/HRC/40/30; A/HRC/45/36).

Mr Essa Al Nukheifi is a human rights defender and anti-corruption activist, who has been subjected to reprisals for his human rights activism and cooperation with international civil society and the United Nations. On 28 February 2018, the SCC sentenced Mr Al Nukheifi to six years in prison, and imposed a six-year travel and social media ban on him upon his release. On 7 April 2018, in a decision that cannot be appealed, the Court of Appeal confirmed Mr Al Nukheifi's sentence.

On 8 April 2019, Mr Al Nukeifi requested to be transferred to Jizan prison in order to be closer to his 80-year-old mother, who struggles to visit him at Makkah General Prison, which is over 700 km away from their usual residence. On 21 November 2019, the WGAD adopted Opinion No. 71/2019, in which the WGAD stated that Mr Al Nukheifi was being detained arbitrarily and called on the authorities for his immediate release.

Update

Between 6 and 14 March 2021, Mr Al Nukheifi and more than 30 other prisoners of conscience undertook a hunger strike in protest over harassment in Al Ha'ir Prison in Riyadh. This included being held in the same ward as psychiatric detainees, some of whom have been violent towards them, and being denied family contact and access to books and newspapers. They ended the hunger strike after the authorities said they will meet the prisoner's demands.

On 11 March 2021, he was transferred to hospital suffering from low blood sugar as a result of the hunger strike.

1.4.3 Abdullah Al Hamid

The case of Mr Abdullah Al Hamid was included in the 2013 and 2020 reports of the UNSG (A/HRC/24/29; A/HRC/45/36).

Mr Al Hamid was co-founder of the ACPRA. On 9 March 2013, the Riyadh Specialised Criminal Court sentenced him to six years of imprisonment on charges of having provided false information to external sources, including human rights mechanisms of the United Nations.

In January 2020, a doctor advised Mr Al Hamid that he urgently needed a heart catheterisation operation. However, the prison administration delayed the operation by several months and it was eventually decided that the operation would take place in late May or early June 2020. Despite his request, Al Hamid was not allowed to remain in hospital whilst awaiting the operation. He was not provided with medical care in prison. On 9 April 2020 Mr Al Hamid suffered a stroke, whilst in prison, and entered into a coma. He was subsequently hospitalised at the King Saud Medical City Hospital (KSMC) and died on 23 April 2020.

Update

On 2 June 2020, several Special Procedures mandate holders sent a communication to Saudi Arabia highlighting his case (AL SAU 8/2020).

Furthermore, starting in late April 2020, the authorities carried out a wave of arrests of journalists and intellectuals for expressing sympathy over the death in detention of human rights defender Abdullah Al Hamid, who died as a result of deliberate medical neglect by the Saudi authorities. Those arrested included journalist Aql Al Bahili, writer

Abdulaziz Al Dukhail, and activist Sultan Al Ajmi. Al Bahili was arrested just two days after posting a tweet of condolence, which he later deleted, and was taken to Al Ha'ir Prison in Riyadh, where he continues to be held without charge and without being granted access to a lawyer. Al Dukhail's and Al Ajmi's status and whereabouts remain unknown.

1.4.4 Loujain Al Hathloul

The case of Ms Loujain Al Hathloul was included in the 2019 and 2020 report of the UNSG (A/HRC/40/30; A/HRC/45/36). Ms Al Hathloul is a Saudi women's rights defender who was arrested and had a travel ban imposed on her after attending a session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). On March 13, 2019 Al Hathloul's trial began before the Specialised Criminal Court. The charges brought against her included "undermining public order, religious values, good morals and private life" and "communicating with journalists, UN human rights bodies and human rights organisations", which are deemed to be "hostile to the state". The case of Ms Al Hathloul was raised by several Special Procedures mandate holders (SAU 15/2014; SAU 7/2018; SAU 1/2019).

Update

In June of 2020, Loujain al Hathloul was forcibly disappeared for two months, leaving her parents with no knowledge of her fate or whereabouts. On 31 August 2020, Ms Al Hathloul's parents were finally able to visit her in prison. On 10 February 2021, and after 1001 days in prison, Loujain was released from prison on probation. In March of 2021, a Saudi appeals court upheld her original sentence. As such, Ms. Al Hathloul is currently facing a five-year travel ban.

1.5 United Arab Emirates

1.5.1 The "UAE 94"

The case of the "UAE94" was included in the 2013 and 2014 reports of the UNSG (A/HRC/24/29; A/HRC/27/38).

General update

All "UAE94" detainees are currently held at Al Razeen prison. Since March 2020, all of the UAE94's families are prevented from visiting the detainees due to COVID-19, in spite of the protective glass barrier placed between the detainee and the visitor. Moreover, almost all detainees are intermittently denied the right to call their family, sometimes for weeks on end.

Mohammed Al Mansoori

Mr Mohamed Al Mansoori is a prominent lawyer working on human rights issues and was the former head of the United Arab Emirates Jurists' Association board, which was dissolved by the authorities in 2011. On 16 July 2012, security forces arrested Mr Al Mansoori as part of the crackdown against the "UAE94". On 2 July 2013, the Federal Supreme Court of Abu Dhabi sentenced Mr Mansoori to ten years in prison. He is currently detained Al Razeen prison, where he has been held in solitary confinement and is regularly subjected to intrusive physical searches.

Update

As of summer 2020, Mr Al Mansoori was still held in solitary confinement. Moreover, in 2020, he was denied the right to contact his family for almost an entire year.

Omran Ali Hassan Al Radwan Al Harthi

Mr Omran Ali Hassan Al Radwan Al Harthi is a Shari'a Auditor in Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank and a known blogger who is affiliated with Al Islah, a group that has engaged in non-violent political debate in the UAE and advocated for greater adherence to Islamic precepts.

On 16 July 2012, Mr Al Harthi was arrested as part of the crackdown against the "UAE94". On 2 July 2013, the Federal Supreme Court sentenced Mr Al Harthi to seven years' imprisonment, for acts related to the exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and of association. In November 2013, the WGAD adopted Opinion No. 60/2013, in which the detention of Mr Al Harthi was qualified as arbitrary. He is currently held at Al Razeen prison.

Update

In July 2019, Mr Al Harthi completed his prison sentence. However, under the pretext of "rehabilitation needs", pursuant to the UAE's Counter-Terrorism Law, the authorities have extended his detention indefinitely. He suffers from ongoing violations, as he continues to this day to be held arbitrarily under the UAE's "counselling" regime envisaged by the Munasaha Centre Law.

Mr Al Harthi continues to be held within the same detention facility – Al Razeen prison – where he had served his initial seven-year sentence. There is no maximum timeline for the stay under the "counselling" regime and he is *de facto* denied the right to appeal against the decision of continued detention. Mr Al Harthi was not presented with any court decision prior to his extended detention. He was not given any reason for the prolongation, nor was he given a chance to defend himself.

Since the detention of the complainant was extended under the Munasaha regime, he has not had access to a lawyer. To this day, he is also prevented from submitting a request for his release and he does not have access to adequate medical treatment. His family does not have any news about his state of health but is in constant worry about his situation.

A ban on visits was pronounced due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Accordingly, the family does not know how the pandemic affects his well-being. The calls are, moreover, cut off as soon as the complainant transmits any information on the conditions in prison. The family moreover suspects that there have been attempts of forcing the complainant to sign a confession that he was guilty and that he repented and to record a video that could be shared in the media.

Mahmoud Hassan Al Houssani

Mr Mahmoud Hassan Al Houssani was arrested on 16 July 2012 as part of the crackdown against the "UAE94". On 2 July 2013, he was sentenced to seven years'

imprisonment. His sentence ended on 16 July 2019. He is currently still arbitrarily detained at Al Razeen prison.

Update

In July 2019, Mr Al Houssani completed his prison sentence. However, under the pretext of “rehabilitation needs”, pursuant to the UAE’s Counter-Terrorism Law, the authorities have extended his detention indefinitely. He suffers from ongoing violations, as he continues to this day to be held arbitrarily under the UAE’s “counselling” regime under the Munasaha Centre Law.

Abdallah Abdelqader Al Hajiri

Mr Abdallah Abdelqader Al Hajiri is a student leader who was arrested in 2012 as part of the crackdown against the “UAE94” for signing a petition calling for democratic reform in the UAE. On 2 July 2013, he was sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment. His sentence ended in July 2019, but he remains detained at Al Razeen prison.

Update

In July 2019, Mr Al Hajiri completed his prison sentence. However, under the pretext of “rehabilitation needs”, pursuant to the UAE’s Counter-Terrorism Law, the authorities have extended his detention indefinitely. He suffers from ongoing violations, as he continues to this day to be held arbitrarily under the UAE’s “counselling” pursuant to the Munasaha Centre Law.

Fahd Abdelqader Al Hajiri

Mr Fahd Abdelqader Al Hajiri is the Director of Engineering Services and the Department of Islamic Affairs and Charitable Affairs in Dubai. He was sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment as part of the “UAE94” on 2 March 2013. His sentence ended on 2 March 2020, but he remains arbitrarily detained at Al Razeen prison.

Update

In March 2020, Mr Al Hajiri completed his prison sentence. However, under the pretext of “rehabilitation needs”, pursuant to the UAE’s Counter-Terrorism Law, the authorities have extended his detention indefinitely. He suffers from ongoing violations, as he continues to this day to be held arbitrarily under the UAE’s “counselling” regime pursuant to the Munasaha Centre Law.

Mansoor Ahmad Al Ahmady

Mr Mansoor Ahmad Al Ahmady is one of the signatories of the 3 March 2011 petition calling for political reforms in the UAE. He was arrested on 12 October 2012 and subsequently sentenced to seven years’ imprisonment. His sentence ended on 12 October 2019. He remains, however, arbitrarily detained at Al Razeen prison.

Update

On 12 October 2019, Mr Al Ahmady completed his prison sentence. However, under the pretext of “rehabilitation needs”, pursuant to the UAE’s Counter-Terrorism Law, the authorities have extended his detention. He suffered from ongoing violations, as he continued to be held arbitrarily under the UAE’s “counselling” regime pursuant to the Munasaha Centre Law.

On 12 April 2021, Mr Al Ahmady was released.

Abdulsalam Al Marzooqi

Mr Abdulsalam Mohamed Derwish Al Marzooqi was the Head of the Family Reform and Guidance Section at Dubai Courts and the general supervisor of Al Bedaya TV. On 24 July 2012, Mr Al Marzooqi was arrested as part of the crackdown against the “UAE94”. On 2 July 2013, the Federal Supreme Court sentenced Mr Al Marzooqi to ten years’ imprisonment, for acts related to the exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and of association. In 2013, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued Opinion No. 60/2013, qualifying the detention of Mr Al Marzooqi as arbitrary and urging the authorities to release him immediately. However, he remains arbitrarily detained in Al Razeen prison.

Update

Mr Al Marzooqi continues to have serious health problems as he had suffered from a facial nerve paralysis. Requests by his family to allow Mr Al Marzooqi to access medical treatment have been rejected. The calls with his family are frequently disturbed or prevented. Moreover, in 2020, the authorities deprived Mr Al Marzooqi’s children of their UAE citizenship. As a consequence, one of his daughters was denied the right to receive a COVID-19 vaccine as she could not present a valid ID.

Hasan Al Jabri

Mr Hasan Munif Abdullah Al Jabri worked as a Deputy Director at the Abu Dhabi Education Zone. On 9 April 2012, Mr Al Jabri was arrested as part of the crackdown against the “UAE94”. On 2 July 2013, the Federal Supreme Court sentenced Mr Al Jabri to ten years’ imprisonment, for acts related to the exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and of association. In 2013, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued Opinion No. 60/2013, qualifying his detention as arbitrary and urging the authorities to release him immediately. However, he remains arbitrarily detained in Al Razeen prison.

Update

Mr Al Jabri’s family has been prevented from visiting him for intermittent periods without any legal justification. Since September 2020, he has also been deprived of any calls with his family.

Khalid Al Shaiba Al Nuaimi

Mr Khalid Mohammad Al Shaiba Al Nuaimi is an online activist and the Head of the Guidance and Social Counselling Association. On 16 July 16, Mr Al Nuaimi was arrested as part of the crackdown on the “UAE94”. On 2 July 2013, the Federal Supreme Court sentenced Mr Al Nuaimi to ten years’ imprisonment, for acts related to the exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and of association. In 2013, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued Opinion No. 60/2013, qualifying Mr Al Nuaimi’s detention as arbitrary and urging the authorities to release him immediately. However, he remains arbitrarily detained in Al Razeen prison.

Update

Since the beginning of COVID-19 in March 2020, the family of Mr Al Nuaimi has been prevented from visiting him, in spite of the protective glass barriers put up between the detainees and visitors. He gets deprived from calls with his family at times for weeks.

Mohammed Al Sidiq

Mr Mohammed Abdulrazzak Al Sidiq is a member of Al Islah and a political dissident. He used to work as a teacher at the University of Sharjah. On 9 April 2012, Mr Al Sidiq was arrested as part of the “UAE94”. On 2 July 2013, the Federal Supreme Court sentenced Mr Al Sidiq to ten years’ imprisonment, for acts related to the exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and of association. In 2013, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued Opinion No. 60/2013, qualifying Mr Al Sidiq’s detention as arbitrary and urging the authorities to release him immediately. However, he remains arbitrarily detained in Al Razeen prison.

Update

Since the beginning of COVID-19 in March 2020, the family of Mr Al Sidiq have been prevented from visiting him, in spite of the protective glass barriers put up between the detainees and visitors. He gets deprived from calls with his family at times for weeks. In general, the contact between him and his family is very limited, which is a continued violation of his right to contact the outside world, in contravention of the Nelson Mandela Rules on family contacts.

In addition, three of Mr Al Sidiq’s children have been stripped of their citizenship - as was the case for Mr Al Sidiq himself in 2011 -, which has resulted in a number of other ongoing violations, for instance, in relation to traveling abroad or accessing higher education in the UAE.

Ahmed and Muhammad Al Nuaimi

Ahmed Al Nuaimi is a member of *Al Islah* and its director of education. In 2013, he was sentenced *in absentia* to 15 years in prison. He currently resides in the United Kingdom (UK) and has been unable to return to the UAE since 2012 out of fear of arrest. Shortly after the crackdown on the “UAE 94”, and in reprisal for Mr Al Nuaimi’s activism, his family was placed on a travel ban. Though the family was eventually able to leave the UAE through a land border, his son Muhammad Al Nuaimi was unable to take such an arduous trip due to his health condition. Mr Muhammad Al Nuaimi is in a state of quadriplegia and was thus unable to take such an arduous trip due to his health condition and disability.

Update

Ahmed Al Nuaimi’s son Muhammad continues to be separated from the rest of his family. He remains unable to leave the UAE due to the authorities’ travel ban against him, in reprisal for his father’s activism within the “UAE 94”.

1.5.2 Maryam Soulayman Al Balushi and Amina Al Abdouli

The cases of Ms Amina Al Abdouli and Ms Maryam Soulayman Al Balushi were included in the 2019 and 2020 reports of the UNSG (A/HRC/40/30; A/HRC/45/36).

Ms Al Abdouli and Ms Al Balushi were both arrested in 2015 on state security charges and subsequently sentenced to five years in prison. In 2018, Ms Al Abdouli and Ms Al Balushi raised international awareness of human rights violations they suffered. On 12 February 2019, Special Procedures mandate holders sent an urgent appeal to the Emirati authorities (UA ARE 2/2019). As a result, they both suffered from reprisals.

In 2019, three new charges were brought against them relating to their endeavours to raise public awareness of their cases, namely “leaking wrong information”, “affecting the reputation of the UAE and Al Wathba prison negatively”, and “causing problems between countries”. In February 2020, both women were placed in solitary confinement in reprisal for refusing to provide the authorities with a recorded false confession intended for broadcasted on Emirati TV in relation to the latest charges.

In 2020, both Ms Al Abdouli and Ms Al Balushi went on hunger strike, and in March of 2020, Ms Al Balushi attempted suicide in Al Walthba prison. Ms Al Abdouli’s solitary confinement ended in March 2020 and in April of that year, she made a recording public wherein she stated that she has not received any medical care since her solitary confinement, despite her deteriorating health.

Update

Although Ms Amina Al Abdouli and Ms Maryam Al Balushi finished serving their sentences on 19 November 2020, they have not been released yet. According to a direct source they were transferred from Al Wathba prison last summer, but their current whereabouts are unknown. Amina had made another recording in which she stated that the public prosecution has filed a new case against her and Maryam in reprisal to their previous recordings being made public.

On 23 November 2020, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued Opinion 61/2020 on their cases, qualifying their detention as arbitrary and urging the authorities to release them immediately.