

21 March 2017

UAE - Human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor detained

On 20 March 2017, human rights defender **Ahmed Mansoor** was arrested at his home by United Arab Emirates (UAE) security forces. The UAE Information Technology (IT) Crimes Prosecution ordered that the human rights defender be detained pending investigation on charges that include disseminating false information to promote sedition, hatred, and damage to national unity.

[Ahmed Mansoor](#) is one of the few voices within the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that provides a credible independent assessment of human rights developments in the country. In 2015, he won the prestigious Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders as a result of his continued work on human rights despite a crackdown on human rights defenders in UAE. Ahmed Mansoor regularly raises concerns on arbitrary detention, torture or ill or degrading treatment, failure to meet international standards for fair trials, non-independence of the judiciary, domestic laws that violate international law, and other violations of civil rights. He has been jailed for his efforts, and is currently banned from travelling.

On 20 March 2017 around midnight, twelve members of the UAE security forces arrested Ahmed Mansoor at his apartment in Ajman under orders from the Emirati IT Crimes Prosecution. According to sources, he was brought before the IT Crimes Prosecution for questioning in relation to his use of social media to “spread false information and rumors that promote sectarianism, sedition, hatred, damage to national unity, peace and social life, harm to the reputation of the State and its status, and the incitement of others not to abide by UAE laws”. In recent days the human rights defender called for the release of Emirati human rights activist Osama Al-Najjar via Twitter. His arrest may also be linked to a letter that he signed, along with other activists in the region, and addressed to Arab leaders meeting in Jordan at the Arab Summit, calling for the release of all prisoners of conscience in the Middle East.

Following the arrest of Ahmed Mansoor, the UAE security forces thoroughly searched the home of the human rights defender and confiscated many of his belongings, including all computers and electronic equipment, some of which belonged to his children.

The authorities in the UAE have long targeted Ahmed Mansoor for his work on human rights. In 2011, he was jailed and banned from travelling following his involvement in a petition that called for democratic reform in the UAE. As a result of the petition, Ahmed Mansoor was jailed along with four others in connection with the online discussion forum, UAEHewar.net, in what became widely known as the UAE5 case. He was accused of publicly insulting the UAE leadership and was sentenced to three years imprisonment, but released following a presidential pardon after spending nearly eight months in jail. Since the UAE5 case, UAE authorities have failed to return Ahmed Mansoor’s passport and have banned him from travelling.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the arrest of Ahmed Mansoor and believes that it is solely related to his legitimate and peaceful work on the protection and promotion of human rights in the UAE.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in the UAE to:

1. Take all necessary measures to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Ahmed Mansoor and guarantee his physical and psychological security and integrity;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Ahmed Mansoor, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the '*Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment*', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Drop all charges against the human rights defender as they are motivated by his legitimate and peaceful human rights work, and return all of his possessions;
4. Allow human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor to move freely without undue restrictions within the GCC region, and return his passport immediately with a view to allowing him to travel outside the GCC region;
5. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the UAE are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.