

**Question for written answer E-011301/2015**  
**to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**  
Rule 130  
**Charles Tannock (ECR)**

Subject: VP/HR - Prisoners in the UAE

It has been drawn to my attention that in 2011 during demonstrations a group of activists petitioned the President of the United Arab Emirates for greater political freedoms, with direct calls for a fully elected Federal National Council and a more independent judiciary.

The UAE authorities claim that those involved as members of the al-Islah group were seeking to subvert the state and initiate a coup. A report published in February 2014 by the UNHRC Working Group on Arbitrary Detention states, however, that 'expressing criticism of one's country and its leaders and communication with other political actors in a peaceful way should not be categorised as an attempt to overthrow a Government'.

The trials of March 2013 resulted in the sentencing and detention of 61 persons, as well as a further 15 who were sentenced in absentia. The remaining 25 were released without charge.

1. What view does the Vice-President / High Representative take on this matter, and has this issue been discussed at the Council of Foreign Ministers? Does the VP/HR regard those sentenced as political prisoners?
2. What view, if any, does the EEAS take regarding the al-Islah group and the claims of the UAE authorities that it is a group seeking to subvert the state?