



Plenary sitting

B9-0442/2021

14.9.2021 **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the case of human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor in the UAE
(2021/2873(RSP))

Katalin Cseh, Petras Auštrevičius, Malik Azmani, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Dita Charanzová, Olivier Chastel, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Svenja Hahn, Irena Joveva, Karin Karlsbro, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Karen Melchior, Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Samira Rafaela, Frédérique Ries, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Ramona Strugariu
on behalf of the Renew Group

B9-0042/2021

**European Parliament resolution on the case of human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor in the UAE
(2021/2873(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions, in particular that of 3 October 2018 on the United Arab Emirates, notably the situation of human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor, of 14 October 2012 on the human rights situation in the UAE;
- having regard to the Cooperation Arrangement between the UAE and the EEAS signed in 2018; the ninth round of the EU-UAE human rights dialogue held in Brussels in January 2020; the second senior officials meeting between the UAE Foreign Ministry and the EEAS of 3 March 2021;
- having regard to the UAE Chapter of the 2020 EU annual report on human rights and democracy in the world;
- having regard to the third EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020 - 2024; the EU Guidelines on Torture, on Freedom of Expression and on Human Rights Defenders;
- having regard to the statement by the UN Human Rights Experts of 7 May 2019 condemning detention conditions, and of 12 June 2018 calling for the immediate release of detained human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor;
- having regard to article 30 of the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates;
- having regard to rule 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. Whereas, especially since 2011, UAE citizens and residents as well as journalists, lawyers, judges, teachers and human rights defenders speaking up on political and human rights issues and citizens suspected of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood are at serious risk of arbitrary detention, imprisonment, and torture;

B. Whereas according to the 2020 EU annual report on human rights and democracy in the world, there was no change to the UAE's approach to civil and political rights and political pluralism, with very limited political participation of citizens through democratic institutions and no fully elected representative body;

C. Whereas the UAE continues to employ vaguely worded and loosely interpreted provisions in the Penal Code to imprison peaceful critics, political dissidents and human rights activists; Whereas prison conditions and the right to a fair trial, especially in state security cases, remain concerning due to allegations of torture and ill treatment;

- D. Whereas in May 2020, the EUSR for Human Rights wrote a letter to UAE Foreign Minister, calling for the release of individual cases of jailed activists and vulnerable detainees;
- E. Whereas the UAE has not ratified several core UN human rights treaties, notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, its optional protocols abolishing the death penalty and against torture, as well as the UN Convention on Enforced Disappearances;
- F. Whereas Ahmed Mansoor, one of the UAE's most prominent and prize-awarded human rights activists, was arrested in March 2017;
- G. Whereas the UAE's Foreign Affairs Ministry stated on 29 March 2017 that 'the Office of Public Prosecution for Electronic Crimes ordered the detention of Ahmed Mansoor on a charge of spreading false and misleading information over the Internet, through agendas aimed at disseminating antipathy and sectarianism'; whereas other statements of UAE authorities indicated that the sole reason for his detention was in fact his online expression; whereas the charges against him are based on alleged violations of the UAE's 2012 Cybercrime Law;
- H. Whereas on 29 May 2018 the Abu Dhabi Court of Appeals sentenced Ahmed Mansoor to 10 years in prison and fined one million UAE dirhams (EUR 232 475); whereas on 31 December 2018 the Federal Supreme Court upheld his sentence; Whereas both trials were closed and authorities refused to publish charge sheet and court rulings; whereas according to Human Rights Watch and the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, he was convicted solely for his human rights advocacy, including tweeting about injustice in his country, taking part in webinars on human rights and sending messages to human rights NGOs;
- I. Whereas, Mr Mansoor has remained in solitary confinement in Abu Dhabi's Al Sadr prison since his arrest in March 2017, living in a tiny cell, sleeping on the floor with no mattress even during winter nights, prevented from any reading material; whereas he has been prohibited from making any form of contact with inmates and his family, apart from four 30 minute-visits by his wife and limited phone calls to his mother and wife since;
- J. Whereas Mr. Mansour went on hunger strikes twice in 2019, losing 8.5 then 11.5 kilograms, demanding blankets, soap and an end to his solitary confinement; whereas authorities rejected his demands, except to call his wife and mother twice a month and exercise three times a week; Whereas, according to Human Rights Watch's 2021 report the UAE's State Security Agency has kept Mr. Mansour in solitary confinement despite the fact that both judges in his two trials ordered prison authorities to end his solitary confinement;
- K. Whereas prior to his detention Ahmed Mansoor was harassed by UAE authorities for over six years and repeatedly faced physical assaults, death threats, physical and electronic surveillance; whereas after seven months of pre-trial detention, he was sentenced to three years in prison for 'insulting officials' in 2011 in an unfair trial; whereas he was released on presidential pardon after eight months but was never given his passport;
- L. Whereas before his latest arrest in 2017 Mr Mansoor called for universal and direct elections in the UAE and for the Federal National Council, a government advisory board, to be granted

legislative powers; whereas Mr Mansoor also administered an online forum called the Emirati Dialoge (Al-Hiwar al-Emarati) which criticised UAE policies;

M. Whereas other recognized human rights defenders are prisoners of conscience in the UAE, including leading human rights lawyer Mohamed Al Roken serving a 10 year sentence since 2012, as well as economist and human rights defender Nasser Bin Ghaith who lectures at the Paris Sorbonne University's Abu Dhabi branch, serving a 10 year sentence for his tweets on democracy in the UAE;

1. Strongly condemns, once again, the detention of Ahmed Mansoor and all other human rights defenders in the United Arab Emirates, solely imprisoned for their commitment to promote human rights and freedoms, and for using their fundamental right to freedom of expression both online and offline; Deeply deplores the gap between the UAE's claims to be a tolerant, progressive and rights-respecting country and the fact its own human rights defenders are detained in harsh conditions;
2. Calls, once again, on UAE authorities to release Mr Mansoor immediately and unconditionally, and to drop all charges against him; calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all other prisoners of conscience in the UAE, including Nasser Bin Ghaith and Mohamed Al Roken;
3. Expresses its grave concern at the continued reports, including through leaked letters published in July 2021, that Ahmed Mansoor still remains in dire conditions in solitary confinement; urges authorities to enforce the judges' orders to end his solitary confinement and grant him immediate and regular access to a lawyer of his choosing, to his family, and to adequate medical care; reminds UAE authorities that prolonged and indefinite solitary confinement amounts to torture;
4. Calls on UAE authorities to guarantee all detainees, including prisoners of conscience, due process and a free and fair trial; reminds that Ahmed Mansour has been arrested and detained without an arrest warrant and any judicial oversight;
5. Urges UAE authorities to amend the Counter-Terrorism Law, the Cybercrimes Law and Federal Law No 2/2008, which are repeatedly used to prosecute human rights defenders, in order to comply with international standards;
6. Calls for an EU-wide suspension of repressive surveillance technology, including for the export, sale, update and maintenance of technology to the UAE which may be used for internal repression; calls, in this regard, for a full implementation of the 2021 EU dual-use regulation;
7. Calls on the EU High Representative, once again, to take a strong public stance and demand Mr Mansoor's release; calls on the EEAS to report back to the European Parliament on the actions undertaken so far by the EU Delegation and EU Member States in Abu Dhabi, to provide Mr Mansoor with appropriate support;

8. Welcomes the UAE's moratorium on executions since 2017 as well as the UAE's 2020 abstention on the UN resolution for the abolition of the death penalty; calls on the UAE to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its protocol in view of abolition;
9. Considers that regular interparliamentary meetings between Parliament and its partners in the Gulf region are an important forum for developing a constructive dialogue on all issues including human rights, security and trade;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of the United Arab Emirates, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the governments of the GCC Member States;