

Question for written answer E-004741/2021

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

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Subject: UAE-94 dissidents still unfairly imprisoned after nearly a decade

In 2013, more than 60 men were accused of plotting to overthrow the UAE Government and were convicted in a grossly unfair mass trial. They received lengthy prison terms of up to 15 years. The trial was in breach of several fundamental rights, namely the right to a fair trial, with defendants held incommunicado for periods of up to one year and several stating that they were tortured into confessing.

The UAE authorities have yet to release details about the convictions, but the defendants were charged with, among other things, association with a group that aimed to overthrow the country's political system. Many of those sentenced are members of a local group, Reform and Social Guidance Association (al-Islah), which has been engaged in peaceful political debate for many years and advocates greater adherence to Islamic precepts.

Eight years have elapsed since these events and the UAE-94 have yet to be released and are still imprisoned in grossly unfair conditions. There have also been instances of acts of reprisal toward relatives, some of whom have been stripped of their nationality and, as a consequence, forced to flee the country.

Is the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy aware that these violations of the rights to a defence and a fair trial are ongoing?