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TEXTS ADOPTED

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**P8\_TA(2018)0376**

**The UAE, notably the situation of human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor  
European Parliament resolution of 4 October 2018 on the UAE, notably the situation of  
human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor (2018/2862(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions, including that of 26 October 2012 on the human rights situation in the United Arab Emirates<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the statement of 4 June 2018 by the chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights condemning the 10-year prison sentence issued against Ahmed Mansoor,
- having regard to Article 30 of the Constitution of the United Arab Emirates (UAE),
- having regard to the Arab Charter on Human Rights, to which the UAE is a party,
- having regard to the EU Strategic Framework and the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 16 October 2017 on the Mid-Term Review of the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy,
- having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders of 2004, as updated in 2008,
- having regard to the statement by the UN Human Rights Experts of 12 June 2018 calling for the immediate release of jailed human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor,
- having regard to the Co-Chairs' statement of 18 July 2016 at the 25th Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting of the European Union and of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf in Brussels,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to the International Covenant on Civil and

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 72 E, 11.3.2014, p. 40.

Political Rights (ICCPR), to which the UAE is party,

- having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Ahmed Mansoor was arrested by UAE security officers in March 2017; whereas he is a prominent human rights activist and the 2015 laureate of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders; whereas Mr Mansoor may have been the last remaining human rights defender in the UAE who had been able to criticise the authorities publicly;
- B. whereas the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation explained in a statement on 29 March 2017 that 'the Office of Public Prosecution for Electronic Crimes ordered the detention of Mr Ahmed Mansoor on a charge of spreading false and misleading information over the Internet, through agendas aimed at disseminating antipathy and sectarianism'; whereas this and other official statements of the UAE authorities indicated that the sole reason for his detention, trial, and conviction was the content of his expression online, and the charges against him are based on alleged violations of the UAE's repressive 2012 Cybercrime Law, which has allowed UAE authorities to silence human rights defenders and provided for long prison sentences and severe financial penalties for individuals who criticise the country's rulers;
- C. whereas the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights has assessed that the arrest and secret detention of Ahmed Mansoor may constitute an act of reprisal for his engagement with UN human rights mechanisms and for the views he has expressed on social media, including Twitter, as well as for being an active member of organisations such as the Gulf Centre for Human Rights;
- D. whereas a group of UN human rights experts has called on the UAE Government to release Mr Mansoor, describing his arrest as a direct attack on the legitimate work of human rights defenders in the UAE;
- E. whereas on 29 May 2018, Ahmed Mansoor was sentenced to 10 years in prison for exercising his right to freedom of speech in Twitter posts following a grossly unfair trial in Abu Dhabi; whereas he was also fined one million UAE dirhams (EUR 232 475) and was to be placed under surveillance for three years on his release; whereas Mr Mansoor has appealed against the sentence, but the timing of the appeal process remains unclear;
- F. whereas subsequently to his arrest in March 2017, Mr Mansoor has reportedly been prohibited from making any form of contact with his family, and has only been granted four visits by his wife since that date; whereas he has reportedly remained in solitary confinement since his arrest and allegedly subjected to torture; whereas according to the UAE authorities he is being detained in Al Sadr prison in Abu Dhabi;
- G. whereas it appears that Mr Mansoor has not been able to appoint an independent lawyer of his own choosing in spite of government assertions that he may do so; whereas the right to see a lawyer is a basic right of any detained person, as outlined in Article 16 of the Arab Charter on Human Rights, which the UAE has ratified;
- H. whereas Ahmed Mansoor has been harassed and persecuted by the UAE authorities for more than six years and has repeatedly faced physical assault, death threats, and 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 a trial deemed unfair; whereas he was released after eight months on a presidential pardon, but the authorities never returned his passport, subjecting him to a de facto travel ban;

- I. whereas before his arrest Mr Mansoor was one of 133 signatories to a petition 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 Al-Hiwar al-Emarati that criticised UAE government policy and leaders; whereas he is a member of the Middle East and North Africa Advisory Committee at Human Rights Watch and an engaged actor with the UN Human Rights mechanisms;
  - J. whereas UAE residents who have spoken up on human rights issues are at serious risk of arbitrary detention, imprisonment, and torture; whereas the crackdown on peaceful activism calling for constitutional reform and reform in relation to human rights issues is still ongoing; whereas attacks on members of civil society, including efforts to silence, imprison or harass human rights activists, journalists, lawyers, and others have become increasingly common in recent years;
  - K. whereas the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers stated after her visit to the UAE in 2014 that lawyers who take up cases related to state security ‘have been harassed, threatened and had pressure exerted on them’; whereas she denounced the fact that the ‘judicial system remains under the de facto control of the executive branch of the government’;
  - L. whereas evidence has emerged that EU Member States have approved exports of various cybersurveillance technologies to countries with appalling human rights records, including the UAE;
  - M. whereas the death penalty continues to be applied in the UAE; whereas at least 19 people are currently on death row and there was one execution in 2017;
1. Strongly condemns the harassment, persecution and detention of Ahmed Mansoor as well as of all other human rights defenders solely on the basis of their human rights work and their use of their right to freedom of expression both online and offline; urges the UAE authorities to conduct thorough and impartial investigations into the attacks against civil society actors in order to bring the perpetrators to justice;
  2. Calls on the authorities to release Mr Mansoor immediately and unconditionally, and to drop all charges against him, as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, including through his human rights work; also calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience in the UAE and for all charges against them to be dropped;
  3. Expresses its grave concern at the reports that Ahmed Mansoor has been subjected to forms of torture or ill-treatment while in detention, and that he is being held in solitary confinement; urges the authorities to investigate these allegations and grant him immediate and regular access to a lawyer, to his family, and to any medical care he may require; reminds the UAE authorities that prolonged and indefinite solitary confinement can amount to a form of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment under international human rights law, and that the lack of an arrest warrant or any judicial

oversight in his arrest and detention represents a breach of the fundamental principles of due process under international human rights law;

4. Calls on the UAE authorities to ensure that detainees deemed to have broken the law undergo due process and are given a free and fair trial according to international standards;
5. Calls on the UAE to review the Federal Law on combating cybercrimes in order to make it conform to international standards relating to the right of everyone to seek, receive, disseminate and impart information and ideas to others, the right to freedom of opinion, expression, and information, access to the internet and the right to privacy; urges the UAE authorities to amend the Counter-Terrorism Law, the 2012 Cybercrimes Law and Federal Law No 2/2008, which are repeatedly used to prosecute human rights defenders;
6. Calls on the UAE authorities to stop all forms of harassment against individuals and immediately to lift the travel ban against human rights defenders, and insists that they guarantee, in all circumstances, that human rights defenders in the UAE are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities, both inside and outside the country, without fear of reprisals;
7. Calls for an EU-wide ban on the export, sale, update and maintenance of any form of security equipment to the UAE which can be or is used for internal repression, including internet surveillance technology; expresses its concern at the ever-increasing use of certain cybersurveillance dual-use technologies against activists and journalists; welcomes, in this regard, the EU institutions' ongoing efforts to update the dual-use export control regulation;
8. Is concerned at the increasing number of individuals who are being punished for collaborating with the UN and its different bodies; urges the UAE authorities to cease the obstruction and harassment of individuals engaged with various UN human rights mechanisms; urges the authorities, furthermore, to allow UN experts, international NGOs or EU officials access to visit Mr Mansoor;
9. Calls for greater freedoms in the UAE; underlines that it is important that the UAE respect its international obligations under human rights law, and urges the authorities to ensure the protection of freedom of speech, thought and expression both online and offline for all UAE citizens, and to comply with all provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, in particular Articles 1, 6(a), and 12(2); stresses that these freedoms are guaranteed not only by universal human rights instruments, but also by the Arab Charter on Human Rights, to which the UAE is a party;
10. Calls on the UAE to confirm its intention to 'uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights' by ratifying the ICCPR and its optional protocols and by issuing a standing invitation to visit to all UN special procedure mandate holders;
11. Calls on the VP/HR, the EU and its Member States to take a strong public stand towards this flagrant violation of human rights, including by demanding Mr Mansoor's release in all contacts they have with the UAE authorities; urges the EU Delegation in Abu

Dhabi to provide all appropriate support to Ahmed Mansoor, including prison visits, trial monitoring and the provision of legal or any other form of assistance that he might require; calls on the European External Action Service (EEAS) to report to the European Parliament on the actions undertaken so far by the EU Delegation in support of Mr Mansoor;

12. Calls on the EEAS to propose, and for the Member States to adopt, EU targeted measures related to serious human rights violations;
13. Reiterates its opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances and calls for a moratorium with a view to its abolition ;
14. Encourages continued dialogue between the EU, its Member States, and the UAE; considers that regular interparliamentary meetings between Parliament and its partners in the Gulf region are an important forum for developing a constructive and frank dialogue on issues of common concern; stresses that interparliamentary discussions should not focus only on security and trade issues, but should also include respect for human rights as a crucial topic in their discussions;
15. 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 EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the governments of the Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council; calls for the translation of this resolution into Arabic.