



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER **AHMED MANSOOR**



Behind the facade of a constitution that claims to protect “freedom of opinion” lies a much harsher reality of persecution and oppression. Expressing opinions – particularly when this involves political dissent – too often leads to arrests and disappearances. Ahmed Mansoor is one of these victims.



Ahmed Mansoor is one of the worlds most prominent human rights defenders. Over the years he has worked extensively with international rights organisations to raise awareness of human rights abuses in the UAE. In this capacity, he is a member of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights and has a seat on the advisory committee at Human Rights Watch. In 2015, he won the prestigious Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders.

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Ahmed Mansoor was detained by Emirati security forces in the early hours of 20 March 2017 at his home in the city of Ajman, UAE.



WAM, UAE's official news agency, stated that he had been arrested for using social media to "promote [a] sectarian and hate-incited agenda," by "publishing false information and rumours that harm national unity and social harmony and damage the country's reputation."



He was held for over a year without charge in an unverified location.



He did not have access to a lawyer of his choosing and he was only permitted two short, supervised family visits.



On 29 May 2018 Abu Dhabi's Supreme Court sentenced the human rights activist to 10 years in prison for "defaming the UAE through social media channels."



He was also fined 1 million Dirhams (£ 204, 327) for insulting the status and prestige of the UAE and its symbols, including its leaders, according to the UAE state-owned publication The National.



His current detention location remains unknown, placing him at grave risk of torture and ill-treatment.



The case has sparked international condemnation, notably from several United Nations human rights bodies, the EU Parliament's subcommittee on Human Rights, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

