

# ABDUL SALAM DARWISH AL MARZOOQI

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

Since the Arab Spring in 2011, the UAE has undertaken a widespread and systematic crackdown on civil society through its repressive Cybercrime and Anti-Terrorism laws that have seen the imprisonment of numerous human rights defenders and activists, including Abdul Salam Darwish Al Marzooqi.

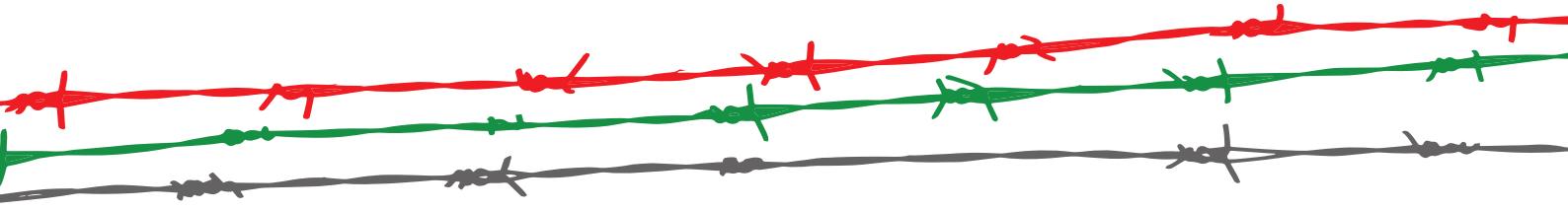
Abdul Salam Darwish was arbitrarily arrested on 24 July 2012 by State Security agents disguised in civilian clothes and subjected to an enforced disappearance for 21 days.

He was held in solitary confinement at an undisclosed location in incommunicado detention for seven and a half months. He was deprived of his right to see his lawyer and was subjected to torture and ill-treatment including threats to cut off his medicine supply.

During this time, his family were permitted one visit on 26 November 2012. They reported that he had lost a significant amount of weight and appeared to be in poor health.

On 9 March 2013, he was transferred to Abu Dhabi's notoriously repressive Al Razeen prison.





At Al Razeen, Al Marzooqi was subjected to both psychological and physical torture, including forceful exposure to continuous bright fluorescent light and freezing cold temperatures. Whilst also being denied basic rights such as sunlight, reading material and adequate winter clothing, he was denied essential medication for his diabetes and other health conditions. Furthermore, he was refused access to legal counsel.

On 2 July 2013, Al Marzooqi was tried alongside 94 other activists, all of whom were affiliated with the Al Islah (Reform and Social Guidance) Association, during the grossly unfair “UAE 94” mass trial and sentenced to ten years in prison followed by three years of probation. He was denied the right to appeal to a higher jurisdiction.

He was convicted for seeking to overthrow the government after openly criticising the Emirati government and launching a petition calling for democratic reforms in the UAE, including full judicial independence, the retreat of the security state and standard human rights.

In August 2013, Al Marzooqi launched a hunger strike to protest the atrocious conditions in which he was being held.

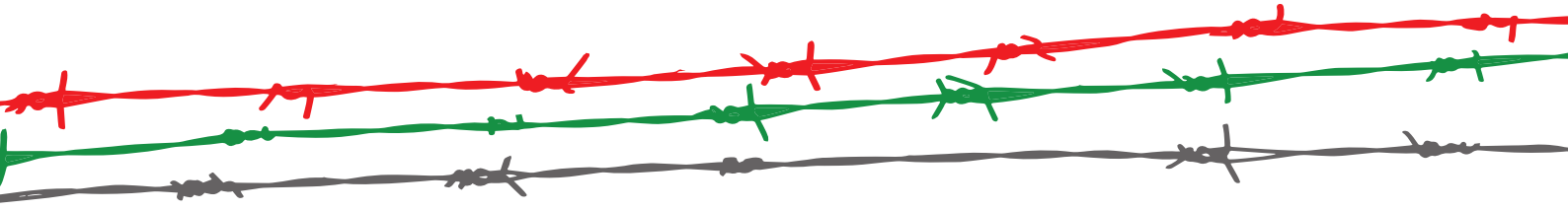
Al Marzooqi suffered from partial facial paralysis in September 2013, which left him unable to use half of his facial muscles. He was denied medical treatment for this condition.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) adopted an opinion and declared Al Marzooqi’s detention to be arbitrary on 22 September 2013. The group requested for his immediate release and to provide him with compensation, however this was unaddressed by the UAE government.

In 2016, Al Marzooqi’s Emirati citizenship was revoked.

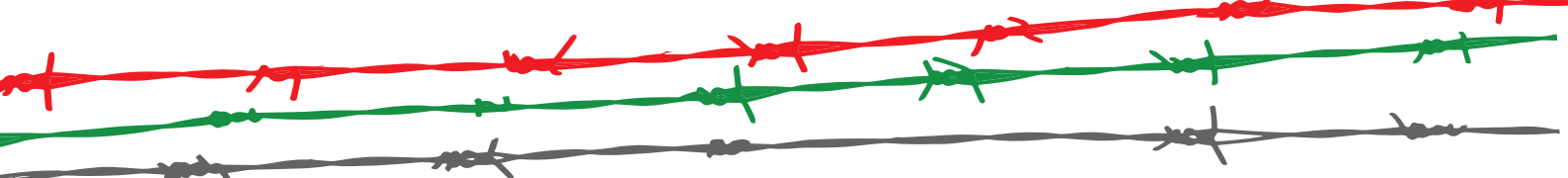
As a form of reprisal in response to his activism, Al Marzooqi’s family have been subjected to “collective punishment.” His wife, Ms Awatef, and children, with the exception of one daughter, are in the US for the medical treatment of his sons.





- In January 2017, the Nationality and Passport Department informed his wife that her children's citizenships had been revoked.
- Consequently, the children are currently ineligible to basic rights such as healthcare, including the COVID-19 vaccine, and education. Al Marzooqi's sons who were receiving medical care had their treatment grants suspended.
- Ms Awatef assumes that her citizenship has also been revoked.
- As a result of their statelessness, the family is currently stranded in the US.
- The family has no stable source of income as Al Marzooqi was stripped of his pension.
- In November 2021, Al Marzooqi's son Salman, who had autism and suffered from neurological disorders since childhood, passed away. Al Marzooqi's imprisonment caused a considerable amount of trauma to Salman, which in turn affected his behaviour and caused his health to severely deteriorate.
- Ms Awatef has previously been threatened with legal action under the UAE's Cybercrime Law after repeatedly pleading for Abdul's release on Twitter and calling on the Emirati authorities to put an end to her family's repression and harassment.
- The family have been repeatedly interrogated by the UAE authorities and threatened with imprisonment if they publish anything about their situation online or speak out about other detainees.
- Since Salman's death, on two separate occasions, the family have been contacted by individuals in the UAE attempting to spy on them.





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Al Marzooqi has not had contact with his family in the US since May 2017. His daughter who remains in the UAE was also prohibited from visiting him from August 2017. After Salman's death, she was granted an additional visit. She is still able to receive irregular phone calls from her father.

**Join our call to help free Abdul Salam  
Darwish Al Marzooqi and  
#FreeUAE94!**

