



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.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AHMED MANSOOR



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 30 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."** An appeal to overturn this was rejected by the Federal Supreme Court in the United Arab Emirates on 31 December 2018. "



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.



He is being held in Abu Dhabi's al-Sadr prison, a facility that fails to meet the UN's Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners due to insufficient medical care and unsanitary conditions.





HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER AHMED MANSOOR



For the majority of his prison stay, Mansoor has been held in solitary confinement in a cell without a bed, running water, toilet or shower facilities. Isolation cells are 4 x 4 metres wide with abrasive lighting to the extent that prisoners request to be left in darkness.



On 17 March 2019, Ahmed Mansoor entered a four-week hunger strike in response to the unjust conditions of his imprisonment in Al-Sadr prison in Abu Dhabi. A source reported that Mansoor experienced a deterioration in health and rapid weight loss. Since ending the hunger strike he was allowed to see his family but prison conditions remain poor.