



ICF UAE

## FACT SHEET 94 UAE

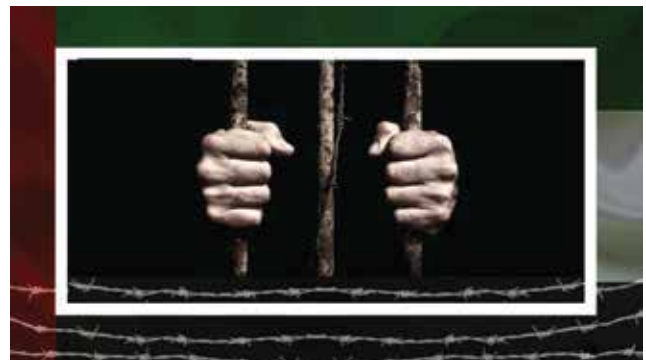
94 activists had openly criticised the Emirati government and launched a petition for democratic reform, a dangerous act of political activism.

Widely criticised by international bodies, the UAE 94 trial was a watershed moment for repression in the UAE. Over six years on, most of those convicted remain detained today in Abu Dhabi's notoriously repressive al-Razeen prison.

■ On 27th January 2013, 94 prominent human rights lawyers, academics, student leaders and teachers were charged with founding, organising and administering an organisation aimed at overthrowing the government. The group had engaged in peaceful political debate for many years in the UAE and advocated for greater rights.

■ At the trial, numerous defendants made credible allegations of torture and inhuman treatment in detention and during interrogations.

■ Out of the 94 people accused of plotting to overthrow the government, 69 were found guilty whilst the remaining individuals (including 13 women) were acquitted. Prison sentences ranged between seven and 10 years. Many of the UAE 94 were held in pretrial secret detention for over 6 months.





- Those convicted had no right to appeal.
- The ruling was reported on local, state-run TV. However, independent observers and international media outlets were denied access to the hearing, as well as the defendant's family members. Furthermore, people who used social media to relay information were imprisoned and journalists were prevented from interviewing the defendant's families.
- The overtly political judicial process raised serious concerns around fair trial guarantees: The tribunal was not independent, and the judge deliberately ignored the numerous allegations of torture, this would suggest the involvement of other state agencies. Access to lawyers was very limited: some defendants had no opportunity to see a lawyer before the trial and key documents used for evidence against the detainees were withheld by the prosecution.
- It is important to note that the evidence used against those persecuted relied heavily on forced confession, most likely achieved through techniques of mistreatment and torture.
- The detainee's families were extremely distressed by the physical deterioration of their relatives. A number of individuals showed obvious signs of malnutrition and abuse. One defendant, Khaled al Nuaimi, had lost 25kg as a result of the ordeal and suffered a curved back after being kept in isolation in a freezing cell.
- Another defendant, Ahmed Al-Suwaidi, whose confessions stands as a central piece of evidence against those convicted, pleaded from the court saying: "I know that what I am going to say may cost me my life, but I deny the charges and I ask the court to protect my life and the lives of my family".

■ The International Commission of Jurists later produced a damning report concluding that the UAE 94 trial had "fallen below fair trial standards".

■ Only one detainee, Abdul Rahman Bin Sobeih Al-Suwaidi, has been released. Initially tried in absentia and sentenced to fifteen years, he was retried in 2016 after being forcibly deported from Indonesia and re-sentenced to ten years on charges of having joined al-Islah. He was released on May 16 2019 after being forced to deny allegations of torture and condemn al-Islah on state TV.



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