



ICF UAE

THE EMIRATES FESTIVAL OF LITERATURE 2018

- Taking place on 1-10 March in Dubai, the festival is said to be the "Arab World's largest celebration of the written and spoken world".
- Despite the liberal image the UAE has abroad, freedoms of speech and the press are severely restricted.
- The festival is sponsored by the government-owned Emirates Airlines and "held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum", the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. As a high ranking government figure, Sheikh Maktoum is complicit in a myriad of systematic human rights violations which are carried out by the Emirati authorities.
- We are witnessing a systematic clampdown on human rights and freedom of expression in the UAE.
- Cybercrime laws allow authorities to monitor online activities and imprison anyone who criticises the government on social media.
- Laws enable courts to disband political associations and imprison their founders and members for a minimum of 10 years.
- Since 2011, hundreds of Emirati citizens have been detained for peacefully campaigning for adherence to international human rights laws and treaties.
- There are currently around 200 prisoners of conscience detained in the UAE (according to ICJHR).
- Human rights organisations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have documented systematic cases of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and torture by UAE security forces.
- Women face constant discrimination especially in cases of rape. Discrimination on the basis of gender is not illegal in the UAE.
- A number of UK authors and illustrators will attend the event.
- ICF UAE encourages UK authors and illustrators to take a stand and speak out clearly in favour of human rights, free speech and democracy in the UAE.