

THE PRACTICE OF INDEFINITE DETENTION IN THE UAE



The UAE consistently fails to release political prisoners past their release date. Since 2012, twelve detainees have been held indefinitely without due process in the UAE. Instead of being released upon completion of their sentence, many prisoners are transferred without legal basis to so-called “counselling centres” inside prison facilities.

Officially used to ‘guide and reform’ those convicted of terrorist offences, these “counselling centres” are increasingly employed as a political tool to silence dissent, under the pretext that political prisoners pose a “threat” to the state and society. Those who have been transferred to such centres have not been charged with any offence, therefore they are not able to appeal a judicial verdict. This practice allows for the government to hold prisoners indefinitely without due process in order to repress human rights activists’ freedom of speech in the UAE.

Indefinite detention of political activists - Facts and figures

- As of 2019, nine prisoners of conscience who have completed their sentences continue to be detained without due process in Abu Dhabi’s Al-Razeen prison.
- In August 2019, only three detainees, Osama Al Najjar, Badr Al Buhairi and Othman Al Shehhi, were released. Their initial sentences expired in March 2017 and July 2018 respectively.
- The UAE’s use of indefinite detention has been condemned internationally by human rights groups, who have increasingly put pressure on the Emirati government to end such practices.

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Violations of human rights

- The continued detention of political activists beyond their original sentence breaches both international human rights norms as well as the UAE's own laws regarding fair trials and due process.
- The UAE fail to clarify why prisoners are being held beyond their original sentence and whether they are charged with an offence.
- UAE counterterrorism law sets no time limit for indefinite detention and fails to define the term "terrorist threat" clearly.
- The UAE fails to enforce its constitutional responsibility to provide defendants with the right to a fair trial, and to provide access to legal counsel.
- Political prisoners are being detained in one of the world's most repressive prisons, Al Razeen, which consistently violates the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.
- Prisoners held in Al Razeen have consistently reported inhumane living conditions as well as the use of torture and other forms of ill-treatment by prison warders.

Join our campaign to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners who are indefinitely detained in the UAE.

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| Name | Status of Prisoner | Sentence | Duration of Sentence | Date of Actual Release |
|---|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Osama al-Najjar | Arbitrary Detention | 17/03/14 - 17/03/17 | 3 years | 08/08/19 |
| Othman al-Shehhi | Arbitrary Detention | 24/07/13 - 24/07/18 | 5 years | 08/08/19 |
| Badr al-Buhairi | Arbitrary Detention | 22/04/14 - 22/04/17 | 3 years | 08/08/19 |
| Ahmed Mohammed Al Molla | Arbitrary Detention | 01/05/14 - 01/05/17 | 3 years | |
| Faysal El Shohy | Arbitrary Detention | 01/05/14 - 01/05/17 | 3 years | |
| Abdallah El Helw | Arbitrary Detention | 22/04/14 - 22/04/17 | 3 years | |
| Said Abdallah Ismail El Brimy | Arbitrary Detention | 26/03/13 - 26/03/18 | 5 years | |
| Abdelwahed Hasan Said El Shohy | Arbitrary Detention | 26/03/13 - 26/03/18 | 5 years | |
| Khalifa al-Rabea | Arbitrary Detention | 23/07/13 - 23/07/18 | 5 years | |
| Abdallah Abdelkader Ahmed Ali Al Hajery | Prisoner of conscience | 16/07/12 - 16/07/19 | 7 years | |
| Omran Ali Hasan Aradwan Al Harethy | Prisoner of conscience | 16/07/12 - 16/07/19 | 7 years | |
| Mahmoud Hasan Mahmoud Ahmed Al Hoseny | Prisoner of conscience | 16/07/12 - 16/07/19 | 7 years | |
| Mansour Hasan Ahmed Abdallah Al Ahmady | Prisoner of conscience | 12/10/12 - 12/10/19 | 7 years | |
| Fahd Abdelkader Ahmed Ali Al Hajery | Prisoner of conscience | 02/03/13 - 02/03/20 | 7 years | |