



Date : 10/08/2021

Save Ahmed Mansoor from the hell of UAE prisons

On Monday, August 9th, 2002 at 18:00 – 20:00 London GMT, AOHR UK held a [seminar](#) titled “Save Emirati human rights activist [Ahmed Mansoor](#)”, who is enduring a ten-year prison term for daring to share his political opinions on social media.

The seminar was chaired and moderated by **Nasim Ahmed**, Senior Researcher, Middle East Monitor, and speeches were delivered by the following speakers: Bruce Fein, Former USA Associate Deputy Attorney General, David Haigh, British human rights lawyer, Caleo Castro, Former detainee in the UAE and Witness of [Ahmed Mansoor](#) situation, Ahmed Al-Shaiba Al-Nuaimi, President of the International Institute for Studies and Development, Stephen Zunes, Politics professor, University of San Francisco – human rights activist.

Bruce Fein, former USA Associate Deputy Attorney General, began his speech by stressing that, under the universal understanding of freedom of speech there is nothing that criminalises speech that criticises the government, and it cannot be considered as defamation either.

Fein also stressed that it is not a strange action for a country that is committing serious human rights violations against [Yemen](#) to be detaining Ahmed Mansoor under a judiciary that has no independence.

“Ahmed Mansoor is a citizen who used free speech to upgrade the level of democracy and freedom of expression and not degraded the government”, he added, highlighting that UAE criminalised dissidents who want to take part in the democratisation discourse.



Fein emphasised that UAE has enough oil revenue; therefore, applying economic sanctions might result in a slight change in behavior.

The [United States](#) could impose asset freezes upon the UAE officials responsible for Mansoor's detention and torture so that they can have no further dealings with the US, and that is up to the Biden administration, he added.

Fein highlighted that although the US still has relations with the UAE regarding weapon sales, it is possible that human rights groups could put enough pressure that leads to banning these officials complicit and the free speech violations from doing business in the US.

David Haigh, British human rights lawyer, stated that the international community condemned the imprisonment and ill-treatment of Ahmed Mansoor by the UAE, and we continue to fight on Ahmed's behalf.

The UAE has largely remained insulated from meaningful criticism and action by its closest allies in relation to its treatment of Ahmed Mansoor.

Haigh noted that despite the UAE's [violations](#) of human rights, not only in the case of Ahmed Mansoor but also in [Yemen](#) for example, its relations with the US, UK, EU have grown deeper and more extensive.

Haigh also highlighted that one of the campaign's goals is to secure the release of "[Princess Latifa](#)", the daughter of the ruler, who was illegally captured in 2018 after she fled from Dubai.

Latifa and others were kidnapped at gunpoint by the UAE, taken to Dubai, and Latifa was held hostage from then until a few months ago.

"In 2018, we sent complaints against the [human rights](#) abuses that the UAE committed against princess Latifa, and a few would listen at that time, however, we put pressure on law enforcement bodies and the UN to take action and we could finally see a change", added **Haigh**.

Haigh stressed that we should internationally focus the spotlight on the case of Ahmed Mansoor so that we reach the same result as that we reached with the case of Latifa.



Haigh concluded by saying, “I call on the governments of the US, Britain, France and other EU countries to privately and publicly call on the [UAE authorities](#) to urgently and unconditionally release Ahmed Mansoor and other detainees in the UAE who were detained for practicing their right of freedom of speech”.

Caleo Castro, former detainee in the UAE and Witness of Ahmed Mansoor situation, said he was in prison in UAE with Ahmed Mansoor and witnessed the violations he was subjected to.

“Ahmad Mansoor is only 51 years old, but his health conditions make him look like a 70-year-old man. He suffers from blood pressure and was not allowed the one hour and 20 minutes to go outside like other prisoners, he only had 20 minutes to do exercises outside”.

Castro added that “Mansoor is not allowed to have anyone around him, go outside, read, and have news from the outside. He only had five minutes to talk to his family, including four kids and wife.

Some jailors knew that Ahmed Mansoor is not guilty, and they helped me to secretly get him books to read”.

“In the prison in Dubai I have seen all kinds of prisoners, rapists, thieves, killers, and others, but the only one who suffered ill conditions in prison is Ahmed Mansoor. Since the first day of his arrest, he said: I want this to be a better country”, Said **Castro**.

He added “I have names of prisoners who were kept in prison even though they were declared innocent by the judge, and we need to do something. It is not fair what the UAE does to its prisoners.”

Castro emphasised that the president of France said that the crown prince of UAE is [torturing](#) prisoners in [Yemen](#), but he also is torturing prisoners in his country, yet violations continue without any kind of accountability.

Ahmed Al-Shaiba Al-Nuaimi, President of the International Institute for Studies and Development, stressed that “it is very hard to hear about the situation of Ahmed Mansoor even though we know the situation of prison in our country and how the UAE treats prisoners and activists.”



He added “Ahmed wanted the best for his country, his family, and the future of his children, but today he is deprived of his right to practice fatherhood”.

“In UAE, criminals enjoy their freedom while Ahmed Mansoor is kept in prison, and we know this is the destiny of other human rights activists in UAE.”, Al-Nuaimi said.

Al-Nuaimi concluded his speech saying, “Ahmed Mansoor is not facing this alone, we have more than [100 activists](#) in jail in UAE, where no one can express his opinion freely.”

Stephen Zunes, Politics professor, University of San Francisco, and a human rights activist, said: “When I visited the UAE with a group of American academics, they offered us a very luxurious stay trying to buy us off, and we could not speak to anyone except those who were selected by the government.”

Zunes emphasised that “governments like UAE would not be able to get away with the kind of prosecution of Ahmed Mansoor unless they knew they had the backing of the Western democracies”.

“[Trump](#) made the pretence of democratic change, but Biden promised to make a real change. However, he [upheld](#) massive new arms shipments that Trump put into effect, now without conditions”, he added.

“The US talks about human rights abuses in different parts of the world. However, when it comes to its allies it becomes a different story. The US is the biggest [supporter](#) of the dictator regimes around the world”, **Zunes** concluded.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK)