



Date: 12/07/2024

UAE issues unjust sentences against 84 detainees to threaten and terrorise opponents

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) emphasised that the collective sentences issued against dozens of Emirati dissidents on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, are politicised, unfair and violate the minimum standards of justice. These sentences came in the retrial of activists on the same charges for which they were tried a decade ago and received varying sentences at the time. The retrial sentences reflect the authorities' persistence in suppressing and terrorising opponents and reveal its complete disregard to national and international laws.

UAE courts witnessed the second-largest mass trial in the country's history, following the famous trial of "UAE 94".

In the current trial, 84 Emirati civil society activists and dissidents appeared before the court on charges of establishing the "Justice and Dignity Committee"; the same charge some of the former detainees in "UAE 94" case faced before, which means that the majority are facing trial for the second time on the same charge.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK

المنظمة العربية لحقوق الإنسان في بريطانيا



This farcical trial resulted in varying prison sentences ranging from 10 years to life imprisonment, in addition to financial fines ranging from 10 to 20 million dirhams.

The rulings were based on the same old evidence used in the first case, without providing any real or substantive evidence, and where witnesses were told what to say.

Detainees faced systematic violations practised by the UAE regime including physical torture, stripping, extracting confessions under torture and forcing them to sing it, in addition to the arbitrary detention conditions, which include exposure to loud music for long periods, sleep deprivation, prevention of communication with the outside world, and preventing the detainees from meeting or speaking to their lawyers.

The “UAE 94” case began in 2013 when a number of political and human rights activists in the Emirates established a human rights organisation under the name “Committee for Justice and Dignity” and were met with severe repression by the regime, which arrested dozens of them and brought 94 people to trial, which resulted in issuing verdicts against 69 ranging between 5 and 15 years imprisonment, before some of them were retried with others on the same charge in the new case.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK

المنظمة العربية لحقوق الإنسان في بريطانيا



The disgraceful international silence encouraged the Emirati authorities to continue violating the rights of detainees, where they announced the second-largest mass trial in the country's history in December 2023 during the climate summit (COP28) in Dubai.

The Emirati regime showed its complete indifference to international criticism, and moved forward with these unfair trials in full view of world leaders who have gathered in the country and chose to prioritise economic and political interests over human rights.

The sentences were issued against 53 people, 5 of whom were sentenced to 15 years in prison, 5 others to 10 years in prison, and 43 to life imprisonment, while dismissing the case against 24 people.

Among the detainees in the old and new case are prominent detainees including Abdul Salam Darwish Al Marzouqi and Sultan Bin Kayed Al-Qasimi, who were sentenced to life imprisonment along with the detained academic Nasser bin Ghaith. The list of those sentenced also included the prominent activist Ahmed Mansoor, whose release the United Nations called for more than once, however the Emirati authorities ignored all the requests.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK

المنظمة العربية لحقوق الإنسان في بريطانيا



The whole list of charges is still unknown, as the authorities restricted access to the case files and did not allow the lawyers to obtain printed or electronic copies of the files. Furthermore, it did not allow them to view the case freely and forced them to view it on a screen in a room surrounded by security personnel who prevented them from taking any photos of what the file included.

AOHR UK stressed that it is time for the international community to intervene urgently and take concrete steps and decisive measures to put an end to these violations and save the lives of these detainees, whose only crime was exercising their right to peaceful expression of their opinions.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK