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Paris, July 18, 2017

**Free Emirati Lawyer Dr. Mohammed al-Roken,
2017 Ludovic Trarieux International Human Rights Prize**

**The UIA Renews Calls for Dr. Mohammed al-Roken's Immediate and Unconditional Release
on 5th Anniversary of Detention**

Dr. al-Roken's Long History in the Defence of Human Rights

For many years, Dr. al-Roken has provided legal assistance to victims of human rights abuses in the UAE, including to fellow human rights defenders.

Among those he has defended are the "UAE 5" human rights defenders who were convicted and sentenced to imprisonment by a UAE court for their human rights work in November 2011 and subsequently released as a result of a presidential amnesty.

Dr. al-Roken has acted for organisations such as Amnesty International for approximately two decades.

He also has been an active and a valuable member of the UIA. As National Vice President of the UIA in United Arab Emirates, he raised awareness among UIA members of challenges for the rule of law in UAE and the difficulties that Emirati lawyers were facing in his country.

The Arrest, Detention, Trial and Sentencing: Lack of Fair Trial and Due Process

Dr. al-Roken was arrested in July 17, 2012 as part of a campaign of mass arrests of human rights defenders, judges, academics, and student leaders following a petition addressed to the government, calling for legislative reforms for greater democratization consistent with constitutional provisions (the 'UAE 94' case).

On July 2, 2013, he was sentenced to a 10-year prison term, including three years of probation and a ban on practicing law for "establishing an organization that aims at overthrowing the government", a charge which he denied in court.

While in detention Dr. Mohamed al-Roken has been denied several of his basic rights including access to his lawyer. In addition, it has been reported that the authorities have subjected him to psychological intimidation.

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He is currently serving a 10-year prison sentence in a high security prison in the Abu Dhabi desert.

He has been denied the basic right to a fair trial: his trial was marred by allegations of torture which were blatantly ignored, the rights of defence which were flaunted, and independent observers who were banned from the court room.

An Appeal to Action:

The UIA welcomes the 2017 Ludovic Trarieux International Human Rights Prize awarded to Dr. al-Roken, which salutes his courageous commitment to the advocacy for human rights and the rule of law in the UAE and sends him a powerful message of international support and encouragement from his colleagues all over the world.

The opportunity should be taken to draw the attention to the situation of human rights in this country which often uses its affluence to mask the government's serious violation of these rights. It is largely documented that the government arbitrarily detains, and in some cases practises, permits or tolerates forced disappearances of individuals who criticize the authorities, and its security forces face allegations of torturing detainees. Authorities have denied access to the country to activists who criticized the UAE's human rights' violations and notably mistreatment of migrant workers.

UN Special Rapporteurs have strongly denounced the arbitrary detentions, torture, irregular revocations of nationality and unfair trials practiced by the UAE authorities against human rights defenders¹.

As a member of the Jury of the Ludovic Trarieux Award, the UIA wishes to send a strong signal to the United Arab Emirates, whose actions and behaviour are clearly inconsistent with its responsibilities and commitments as a member of the Human Rights Council.

The UIA respectfully urges Emirati authorities to take all necessary steps to immediately and unconditionally release Dr. Mohammed al-Roken and to put an end to all forms of persecution, including at the judicial level, against him and all human rights lawyers acting in UAE.

The UIA calls on the international community to express its support for the 2017 Ludovic Trarieux recipient.

¹ See, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Gabriela Knaul, A/HRC/29/26/Add.2; Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, A/HRC/23/48/Add.1 ; Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Githu Muigai, A/HRC/14/43/Add.3