



The UIA Institute for the Rule of Law

STATEMENT

Paris, July 23, 2024

THE UIA EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN AND CALLS FOR THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF LAWYER AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER MOHAMMED AL-ROKEN

The International Association of Lawyers' Rule of Law Institute (UIA-IROL) expresses its deep concern and calls for the immediate release of Emirati lawyer and human rights defender Mohammed AL-ROKEN, who was sentenced to life imprisonment on July 10, 2024 by the authorities of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Mohammed AL-ROKEN, an Emirati lawyer and human rights activist, is a member of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA) and the International Bar Association (IBA). He has also been President of the United Arab Emirates Jurists Association and an active member of Amnesty International. His role as an activist lawyer earned him the Ludovic Trarieux Human Rights Prize in 2017 and the Alkarama Prize for Human Rights Defenders in 2012.

On July 17, 2012, he was arbitrarily arrested by state security agents as he went to the police to report the disappearance of his son and son-in-law. Kept in solitary confinement, Mohammed AL-ROKEN was tried along with 93 other rights defenders, activists, lawyers and students in the case known as "UAE 94". In July 2013, the UAE State Security Court sentenced him to 10 years in prison for allegedly "conspiring against the government".

UIA-IROL already expressed its concern in this case and called on the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to release Mohammed AL-ROKEN. ¹

In spite of this UIA position and other repeated requests from international human rights bodies, it has been brought to the attention of the UIA, by reliable sources, that Mohammed AL-ROKEN has been subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment during his detention.

In 2022, despite the expiry of his sentence, Mohammed AL-ROKEN was not released but remained in prison with 84 other men sentenced at the time.

Following an unfair trial which began on May 9, 2024 before the Federal Court of Appeal in Abu Dhabi on unspecified charges, Mohammed AL-ROKEN was sentenced on July 10, 2024 to life imprisonment.

¹ [Join the campaign to obtain the immediate and unconditional release of the Emirati lawyer Mohammed al-Roken | UIA \(uianet.org\)](https://uianet.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/23/Join-the-campaign-to-obtain-the-immediate-and-unconditional-release-of-the-Emirati-lawyer-Mohammed-al-Roken)

UIA-IROL is gravely concerned by the increasing repression against human rights defenders by the UAE authorities, as exemplified by the case of Mohammed AL-ROKEN. Such actions not only violate the rights of lawyers, but also compromise the fundamental principles of justice and the rule of law in the UAE.

We remind the UAE of its obligations under international law, including the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990), which state that:

“Governments must ensure that lawyers can perform all their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference” (Principle 16).

“When the safety of lawyers is threatened as a result of the exercise of their functions, they must be adequately protected by the authorities” (Principle 17).

Furthermore, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), which every State is obliged to respect and ensure compliance with, clearly provides that:

“No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.” (Article 9)

Considering these principles, UIA-IROL urgently calls for immediate and effective measures to:

ENSURE the immediate and unconditional release of Mohammed AL-ROKEN.

PROTECT lawyers from interference, ensuring that they can carry out their professional duties without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or fear of reprisal.

GUARANTEE the physical and psychological integrity of lawyers in all circumstances, particularly when carrying out their professional duties.

ENSURE that acts of violence and threats against lawyers are rigorously investigated and prosecuted, and that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

UIA-IROL expresses its support for the lawyers of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) who continue to defend human rights and the rule of law despite the repressions.

More about UIA-IROL

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the International Association of Lawyers (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

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