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Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations in New York

H.E Mr. Ahmed Aljarman

Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates a to the United Nations in Geneva

29th September, 2021

Your Excellencies,

Questions from Human Rights Council Elections Pledging Event 2021

On 8th September 2021, Amnesty International and the International Service for Human Rights held an online pledging event for candidate States to the Human Rights Council for the membership term 2022-2024.

This year's event had over 200 online attendees and an overwhelming number of questions posed to candidates, providing an opportunity for candidates to present their visions for membership and to engage with a range of stakeholders on their human rights commitments and pledges.

Despite representatives of the United Arab Emirates regrettably declining to participate in the event, questions were raised regarding your candidature to the Human Rights Council. With the goal of furthering dialogue, as well as improving adherence to Council membership standards and accountability, as articulated in UN General Assembly resolution 60/251, please find below the questions addressed specifically to the United Arab Emirates as well as questions for all candidate States.

The questions, as well as your responses, will be shared on ISHR's website. We request that you please send your responses to Maithili Pai at m.pai@ishr.ch by 8th October 2021.

Questions addressed specifically to the United Arab Emirates

1. *Joseph Alafac (Twitter user)*: Will you establish prompt, thorough, independent, impartial and effective investigations into the alleged violations and breaches of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law? Will you commit to respect the norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law?
2. *Campaign for Freedom in the UAE*: If the UAE is elected, will Ahmed Mansoor and all other imprisoned human rights defenders be freed?
3. *Human Rights Watch*: Why is celebrated Emiritai human rights defender, Ahmed Mansoor wasting away in a UAE dungeon in near-total isolation without a mattress while his country

attempts to hide its abuses via UN Human Rights Council membership?

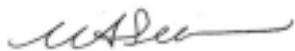
4. *Democracy for the Arab World Now*: What steps have UAE officials taken to ensure well-documented allegations of unjust detention and prosecution torture and ill-treatment in UAE prisons and UAE-operated prisons in Yemen are investigated and that prisoners are protected from such abuse, as well as ensuring the release of human rights activists and defenders such as, Abdulsalam al-Marzooqi, Ahmed Mansoor, Mohammed al-Roken, and Nasser bin Ghaith, who continue to endure unjust imprisonment?
5. *Gulf Center for Human Rights*: Will the UAE release human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience imprisoned just for speaking out against the government's massive violations such as torture, in particular those who are serving, or haven even completed long sentences? And when?
6. *Democracy for the Arab World Now*: Numerous organizations, including the UN, have urged UAE authorities to improve the country's poor prison conditions and allow external visits and independent monitoring; why have UAE authorities refused to allow independent international monitors to enter the country and visit prisons and detention facilities despite repeated calls to do so? Why should the UAE have a seat on the UN Human Rights Council while officials continue to commit human rights abuses and refuse to engage with UN human rights experts on this critical issue?
7. *MENA Rights Group*: In March 2020, several UN experts urged the UAE to investigate and reform detention conditions, which may amount to torture. As a member of HRC, will the UAE allow independent international monitors to enter the country, visit and inspect prisons?
8. *Migrant Rights*: Will the UAE recognise and act against human trafficking for forced labour, and ensure prosecution of those who abet the crime, and not prosecute victims of trafficking?
9. *Migrant Rights*: Will the UAE abolish absconding charges, which harks back to the days of slavery, and are used to intimidate and harass migrant workers?
10. *Migrant Rights*: Will the UAE ensure due judicial process for all migrants who are detained without a fair trial and ensure migrant workers have access to free or affordable legal counsel?
11. *MENA Rights Group*: Does the UAE plan on ratifying the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, optional protocols to the Convention Against Torture, and International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and Article 32 of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance?
12. *MENA Rights Group*: As a member of the Human Rights Council, will the UAE implement the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention's opinions, including Opinion no. 60/2013 calling on the authorities to release members of the UAE 94?
13. *MENA RIGHTS Group*: Based on the UNSG's 2020 reprisals report, Emirati individuals face reprisals for engaging with UN mechanisms, including being subjected to solidarity, confinement, and ill-treatment. How will the UAE promote engagement with UN mechanisms without fear of reprisals?
14. *Human Rights Watch*: How can the UAE be a member of the UN Human Rights Council while brazenly stonewalling its human rights mechanisms and experts? There have been no UN Special Rapporteur country visits since 2014.

15. *MENA Rights Group*: As a member of the Council, how does the UAE plan on responding to the UN Special Procedures' outstanding requests to visit the country?

Questions posed to all candidate States:

1. *Outright International*: The Human Rights Council continues to be a vital resource for LGBTI communities to bring visibility to the human rights violations they face based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics. However, questions related to LGBTI persons are also unfortunately highly politicized at the Council. How would the candidates present today ensure that politics does not get in the way of promoting and protecting the human rights of LGBTI persons?
2. *CIVICUS*: What are the steps you will take to ensure full NGO participation in the Council, its mechanisms and resolutions, and to engage with national and international civil society as a Council member?
3. *Human Rights Watch*: NGOs have been banned from UN headquarters since March 2020. Although UN employees, diplomats & media representatives (resident correspondents) can now enter UN headquarters (with restrictions), NGOs remain under a total ban. What will you do to ensure COVID-19 isn't used as a convenient excuse for those who are not fans of civil society to bar NGOs from UN headquarters? Will you support allowing accredited NGO representatives to participate in UN headquarters activities in line with all UN guidelines and restrictions like other UN stakeholders?
4. *Child Rights Connect*: What are your plans to mainstream and advance child rights at the Human Rights Council?
5. *Permanent Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations*: Ensuring accountability for human rights violations should be a priority for all States, especially Human Rights Council members. The support of the ACT Code of Conduct is an important factor for Liechtenstein's support of a candidature, in addition to its human rights record, pledges and commitments. To what extent are you prioritising strengthening accountability and supporting the ACT Code of Conduct?
6. *Genoveva Sotirova (Twitter user)*: What are your plans in order to improve access to healthcare to low-income individuals?
7. *Genoveva Sotirova (Twitter user)*: What is your plan to promote the right of access to education of Muslim and Roma women refugees?

We look forward to hearing from you.



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