

## **Urgent Action Appeal: The Life of Ahmed Ghaith Al-Suweidi is in Grave Danger**

The Emirates Centre for Human Rights is extremely concerned for the safety of Ahmed Ghaith al-Suweidi. He has appeared in poor physical and mental condition in court, where is being tried on charges of sedition. Throughout both court sessions he has appealed for the court to protect his life and that of his family, accusing security services of threatening to murder him.

Ahmed Ghaith al-Suweidi is a renowned economist and high-ranking civil servant in the United Arab Emirates. Al-Suweidi has supported calls for democratic reform and is a long time member of the civil society organization al-Islah. He was arrested on March 26<sup>th</sup> 2012 and has been held at a secret location ever since. [Human Rights Watch called](#) his detention an enforced disappearance, as he had no contact with the outside world for at least four months in 2012.

Court documents have revealed that prosecution evidence relies on al-Suweidi's testimony and confession. In the first trial session of the UAE 94 he plead not guilty to all charges and appeared to retract his confession. It is widely believed by human rights groups and activists that his confession was given while under torture and al-Suweidi has stated prison guards have tortured him viciously. In court, al-Suweidi pleaded with the judge to protect his life and that of his family due to his plea of not guilty. In the second session he claimed that security services have threatened to murder him if he does not change his plea.

In court, al-Suweidi has appeared in very poor physical and mental health. Unable to support himself, family members present reported that al-Suweidi has lost significant weight since his arrest. Following the first session, where he pleaded for protection from the court, the judge ordered that he be moved from solitary confinement to a prison under the control of the Ministry of Justice. This order has not been followed and al-Suweidi remains at an unknown location.

We are deeply concerned for the welfare of Ahmed Ghaith al-Suweidi and call upon the international community to protect this man's life. His calls for protection have fallen on deaf ears and the situation is swiftly becoming urgent. This man's life is in grave danger and the international community must demand that Emirati authorities reveal his whereabouts, provide him with adequate medical care and protect him from security services that have threatened him.

Furthermore, the United Arab Emirates government must independently and transparently investigate all allegations of torture and hold those responsible to account. We respectfully remind authorities that the United Arab Emirates voluntarily signed the Convention Against Torture in July 2012, which requires that authorities investigate all allegations of torture.

We call upon the International Court of Justice to send a delegation to investigate the matter fully and bring those responsible for acts of torture and threats of violence to justice.

**Emirates Centre for Human Rights** 13/03/2013

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