

BY AIRMAIL

Vice-President and Prime Minister
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Amsterdam, 22 March 2013

Subject: Dr. Mohammad Al-Roken

Your Excellency,

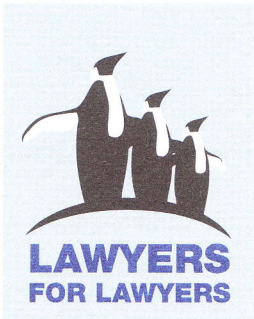
The Dutch Lawyers for Lawyers Foundation (*'Stichting Advocaten voor Advocaten'*) is committed to helping lawyers around the world who are prevented from exercising their profession without any improper interference. Lawyers for Lawyers would like to express its grave concern about the prosecution of our colleague Dr. Mohammad al-Roken, who is a respected human rights lawyer.

Dr Mohamed Al-Roken provided legal assistance to victims of human rights violations in the United Arab Emirates, including to other human rights defenders. Amongst others, he defended the "UAE 5" ; five 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.

According to our information, on 4 March 2013, 94 UAE nationals went on trial, including lawyers Dr Mohamed al-Mansoori and Dr Mohamed 'Abdullah al-Roken – who were arrested on 16 and 17 July 2012 respectively and their lawyer Salem al-Shehhi, who was arrested on 18 July 2012 at the offices of the State Security Prosecutor where he sought information about his clients.

Various organizations, among them Lawyers for Lawyers Foundation, tend to consider the prosecution of Al-Roken and his colleagues as an attempt by the United Arab Emirates' government to curb Dr. Al-Roken's legitimate activities as a lawyer defending human rights in the United Arab Emirates. These organizations fear that the arrest and the prosecution of Dr. Al – Roken are connected to, and serve to frustrate, his invaluable human rights activities.

In this context, we urge the United Arab Emirates' government to recognize the valuable role played by human rights lawyers and to promote and support their work in line with the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of



Offenders in 1990, which provide for a number of rights and responsibilities for lawyers acting in their professional capacity.

In particular paragraphs 16 and 17 of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, state that the Government is under an obligation *'to ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference'*. Further: *'Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities'*.

These principles are universally applicable. Therefore, your government is under an obligation to adequately protect and support its lawyers.

We also draw your attention to articles 9 and 10 of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (UDHR), which state that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

In view of the above, we urge your government, in compliance with its international human rights obligations, to guarantee the physical integrity of Dr. Al-Roken. Furthermore, your government should put an end to all attempts to curb Dr. Al-Roken's legitimate legal work if these are connected to his human rights activities. Moreover, we call upon your government to assure that any action against Dr. Al-Roken and his colleagues is taken in conformity with the principles cited above and other international legal obligations binding upon the United Arab Emirates.

We thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We are confident of your good will and sense of justice and will continue to monitor this case closely.

On behalf of the President of Lawyers for Lawyers, Phon van den Biesen,

Sincerely,

Lawyers for Lawyers

Adrie van de Streek
Executive director