

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism

Ref.: UA LBN 4/2025
(Please use this reference in your reply)

24 November 2025

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 52/7, 60/8, 54/14, 52/9, 53/12 and 58/14.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning **Mr. Abdulrahman Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, a dual Egyptian and Turkish national, who, following extradition from Lebanon, is reportedly being held in a situation of deprivation of liberty in the United Arab Emirates, in conditions of detention which are considered to fall below international standards.**

On 6 January 2025, we issued an urgent appeal to the Government of Lebanon expressing concern at the alleged arbitrary arrest and detention of Mr. Al-Qaradawi, based on charges reportedly relating to his political activism and exercise of freedom of expression, and sounding alarm at his possible extradition to either Egypt or the United Arab Emirates, where he would be at risk of irreparable harm. We requested the Government of Lebanon to review the case of Mr. Al-Qaradawi, ensuring compliance with international human rights standards, particularly the right to due process and fair trial, and called for his release in case the charges brought against him were found to be unsubstantiated. To date, the urgent appeal has been left unanswered.¹

On 8 January 2025, we publicly urged the Government of Lebanon not to extradite Mr. Al-Qaradawi to the United Arab Emirates, expressing deep concern that, if extradited, he risked being subjected to torture or ill-treatment, or enforced disappearance.²

On the same day, Mr. Al-Qaradawi was extradited from Lebanon to the United Arab Emirates. The extradition decision reportedly assessed that there was no evidence suggesting that the crime Mr. Al-Qaradawi was sought for was of a political nature. It gave account of assurances provided by the Government of the United Arab Emirates

¹ See [UA LBN 1/2025](#).

² See [Lebanon must stop extradition of Abdulrahman Al-Qaradawi to the United Arab Emirates](#).

to the Government of Lebanon that Mr. Al-Qaradawi would receive a fair and humane treatment if handed over.

On 20 February 2025, we issued an urgent appeal to the Government of the United Arab Emirates drawing attention of the national authorities to the alleged enforced disappearance of Mr. Al-Qaradawi. A copy of the urgent appeal was sent, among others, to the Government of Lebanon.³

On 5 March 2025, we publicly expressed concern at the lack of information on the fate and whereabouts of Mr. Al-Qaradawi, calling on the Government of the United Arab Emirates to clarify the circumstances of his detention and the state of his health.⁴

According to the information received:

Since his extradition to the United Arab Emirates on 8 January 2025, Mr. Al-Qaradawi has reportedly been deprived of liberty, held in solitary confinement, and without time outside his cell. He is allegedly subject to audiovisual surveillance, and in a cell with no access to natural light or fresh air.

To date, Mr. Al-Qaradawi is said to have had two brief telephone calls with his brother and to have received two visits, from family members and counsel, on 23 March 2025 and on 24 August 2025. These visits lasted approximately ten minutes each and were controlled and monitored. A request for a third visit, formulated by the family after the second one, is currently pending authorization.

While Mr. Al-Qaradawi was sought by the United Arab Emirates for the crime of spreading fake news to stir public opinion and disrupt public security, a vague offence that suggests restrictions on his freedom of expression, no formal charges have reportedly been brought against him.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we wish to express our serious concern at the decision of the Lebanese authorities to extradite Mr. Al-Qaradawi just two days after we had warned the Government of Lebanon that his extradition to the United Arab Emirates (or to Egypt) could result in a violation of the principle of non-refoulement, particularly as codified in article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), acceded to by Lebanon on 5 October 2000, and article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, acceded to by Lebanon on 3 November 1972. We also draw your Excellency's Government's attention to article 8 of the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

When our urgent appeal was sent, the extradition of Mr. Al-Qaradawi was still pending. The aim of our intervention was to prevent irreparable harm from occurring to Mr. Al-Qaradawi. However, despite the seriousness of the allegations we brought to the attention of your Excellency's Government, our concerns were left unheard and, to date, remain unaddressed. We recall that all States shall cooperate with and assist the Special Procedures in the performance of their tasks. States are expected to respond to

³ See [UA ARE 1/2025](#). No reply has yet been received from the Government.

⁴ See [Experts say UAE must reveal fate of forcibly disappeared poet and activist Abdulrahman Al-Qaradawi](#).

communications transmitted to them by the Special Procedures without undue delay.

Regrettably, the risk we had highlighted that Mr. Al-Qaradawi, if extradited, could be subjected to torture or other ill-treatment seems to have materialized and calls into question the legality of his extradition from Lebanon to the United Arab Emirates, which may have been implemented in violation of the principle of non-refoulement, particularly as codified in article 3 of CAT, which obliges the sending State (Lebanon) to be satisfied that there are no substantial grounds for believing that the person to be extradited (Mr. Al-Qaradawi) would be in danger of being subjected to torture, taking into account all relevant considerations. In this regard, we also recall article 10 of the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

Since his transfer to the United Arab Emirates, for over 10 months, Mr. Al-Qaradawi has reportedly been deprived of liberty and held in solitary confinement. We emphasize that indefinite and prolonged solitary confinement are prohibited under international human rights law (UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the “Nelson Mandela Rules”, rule 43). Prolonged solitary confinement is defined as confinement of prisoners for longer than 22 hours per day without meaningful human contact (rule 44). Prolonged solitary confinement, which is prohibited as a form of torture, is understood to be isolation that exceeds 15 consecutive days (rule 44). Long term solitary confinement can cause very serious and irreparable harm to individuals. For this reason, solitary confinement shall be used only in exceptional cases as a last resort, for as short a time as possible and subject to independent review, and only pursuant to the authorization by a competent authority. It shall not be imposed by virtue of a prisoner’s sentence (rule 45).

We would like to draw the attention of your Excellency’s Government to paragraph 16 of resolution A/RES/65/205 of the General Assembly which “recognizes that *diplomatic assurances*, where used, do not release States from their obligations under international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law, in particular the principle of non-refoulement.” This is also the view of the Committee against Torture such that diplomatic assurances cannot be used as a loophole to transfers.⁵

The decision of the Lebanese authorities to extradite Mr. Al-Qaradawi, however, was reportedly based exclusively on the diplomatic assurances provided by the Government of the United Arab Emirates that he would receive a fair and humane treatment, coupled with a positive assessment of the United Arab Emirates’ international engagement in promoting and protecting human rights, generically done in light of the country’s membership in the Human Rights Council, and a 2021 international – but not United Nations – ranking, at the regional level, of its civil and criminal justice systems. These factors appear inadequate in light of the information we had provided on the United Arab Emirates and other publicly available and UN reports. No specific consideration appears to have been given to the personal history and situation of Mr. Al-Qaradawi.

Furthermore, it does not appear that your Excellency’s Government has taken any steps to follow-up on the assurances provided to you and to check on the status of

⁵ Committee against Torture, general comment No. 4 (2017) on the application of article 3 in the context of article 22, para. 20.

treatment and legal proceedings facing Mr. Al-Qaradawi.

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.

We are issuing this appeal in order to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned individual from irreparable harm and without prejudicing any eventual legal determination.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide information on what measures the Government of Lebanon has taken or intends to take with the authorities of the United Arab Emirates in order to ensure the physical and mental health of Mr. Abdulrahman Yusuf Al-Qaradawi and the full implementation of the Convention against Torture and articles 7, 9 and 10 of the ICCPR. In particular, please explain what representations have been made or will be made in respect of demanding the end of Mr. Al-Qaradawi's prolonged solitary confinement without delay; that he is granted access to adequate medical assistance, as appropriate, and to effective legal representation; and that he can exercise his right to communicate with the lawyer of his choice, his relatives and to be visited by consular officials from Türkiye.
3. Please provide information on whether there has been any investigation on the extradition proceedings against Mr. Al-Qaradawi and please provide the results of it, including in terms of accountability of persons possibly found responsible for any violation. If there has been no investigation, please explain why.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency's Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person responsible of the alleged violations.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government

to clarify the issues in question.

Further, we would like to inform your Excellency's Government that after having transmitted the information contained in the present communication to the Government, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention may also transmit the case through its regular procedure in order to render an opinion on whether the deprivation of liberty was arbitrary or not. The present communication in no way prejudices any opinion the Working Group may render. The Government is required to respond separately to the allegation letter and the regular procedure.

Please be informed that a copy of this letter will be sent to the Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Permanent Mission of Türkiye, and the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates, in Geneva. Another letter expressing similar concerns will also be sent to the Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates in Geneva, and a copy of it will be sent to the Permanent Mission of Lebanon, in Geneva.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Alice Jill Edwards
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or
punishment

Matthew Gillett
Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

Gabriella Citroni
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

Irene Khan
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion
and expression

Margaret Satterthwaite
Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers

Ben Saul
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental
freedoms while countering terrorism