

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 ARE 7/2025
(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 detained in conditions which are considered to fall below international standards in the United Arab Emirates.**

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 activism and exercising his freedom of expression, and sounding alarm at his possible extradition to either Egypt or the United Arab Emirates, where it was assessed 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 could be 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. We understand that the extradition decision took account of assurances provided by the Government of the United Arab Emirates to the Government of Lebanon that Mr. Al-Qaradawi would receive a fair and humane treatment if handed over.

¹ See [UA LBN 1/2025](#).

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

On 20 February 2025, we issued an urgent appeal to the Government of the United Arab Emirates drawing the 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 regarding the conditions of his detention, which if established, could amount to a violation of Mr. Al-Qaradawi's right to be free from torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including the requirement of humane treatment in detention, protected by article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and, at least, articles 1, 2 and 16 of the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), acceded to by the United Arab Emirates on 19 July 2012.

In particular, his period of approximately 10 months being held in prolonged solitary confinement is very concerning. 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

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](#).

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 further recall that persons deprived of liberty must always be treated in a humane manner and with respect for their inherent dignity. They shall always have access, *inter alia*, to effective legal representation and adequate medical assistance; prompt judicial review of their initial and continuing deprivation of liberty; remedies for any violations; and have the possibility to communicate with a lawyer of choice, their relatives and to be visited by independent human rights monitoring bodies. In case of foreigners, they shall also be promptly informed of their right to communicate with a consular post or the diplomatic mission of the State(s) of which they are nationals.

Persons deprived of liberty also have the right to be informed at the time of arrest of the reasons for their arrest, and subsequently of any charges brought against them. If not promptly charged or convicted of any crime, they should be released.

The conditions in which Mr. Al-Qaradawi is presently being held also call 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.

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 your Excellency's Government that he would receive fair and humane treatment, amongst other (less relevant) factors. No specific consideration appears to have been given to the personal history and situation of Mr. Al-Qaradawi, as required by article 3 CAT.⁶

Lastly, we consider that the above-mentioned allegations raise issues concerning potential violations of Mr. Al-Qaradawi's right to liberty and security of the person, which includes the prohibition of arbitrary detention, protected by article 9 of the UDHR; as well as the right to due process and fair trial, established in articles 10 and 11 of the UDHR. We also note the absolute prohibition of enforced disappearance, which is also a form of torture and/or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and prohibited in customary international law. Its prohibition has attained the status of *ius cogens*. In this regard, we would like to recall articles 1, 7, 8 and 10 of the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced

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

⁶ Committee against Torture, general comment No. 4 on article 3, para. 17.

Disappearances.

In light of the above, we respectfully call on the Government of the United Arab Emirates to honour the assurances provided to the Government of Lebanon to treat Mr. Al-Qaradawi in a fair and humane manner and to take all necessary measures to prevent any irreparable harm.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Government of the United Arab Emirates immediately ends the solitary confinement of Mr. Al-Qaradawi and ensures that he has access, without delay, to adequate medical assistance, as appropriate, and to effective legal representation; and that he has the possibility to communicate with the lawyer of choice, his relatives and to be visited by consular officials from Türkiye.

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. Please clarify if the Prosecution has brought any charges against Mr. Al-Qaradawi or is planning to do so.
2. Please clarify the factual and legal basis for Mr. Al-Qaradawi's detention and any charges brought against him, and explain how such measures comply with international standards, including his right to freedom of expression and his right not to be arbitrarily detained. Please detail the steps taken to ensure that judicial proceedings against Mr. Al-Qaradawi are in line with the UAE's human rights obligations, particularly the right to due process and a fair trial.
3. Please provide updated and detailed information on the present state of physical and mental health of Mr. Al-Qaradawi. Please explain what measures have been taken to preserve his health and well-being, including timely access to adequate medical care, as appropriate.
4. Please provide detailed and updated information on Mr. Al-Qaradawi's conditions of deprivation of liberty and please assess them against international human rights law and standards, in particular the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including the requirement of humane and dignified treatment in detention, and the prohibition of enforced disappearance. Please also explain how they are compatible with Mr. Al-Qaradawi's right to liberty and security; and the right to due process and fair trial.

Should they be not in alignment, please explain the steps that have been taken to remedy and improve the conditions in which Mr. Al-Qaradawi is held. Please explain whether there has been any investigation in this regard, as required by international law, and please provide the results of it, including in terms of accountability of persons possibly found responsible for any violation.

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 prevent any irreparable harm to Mr. Al-Qaradawi, to halt the alleged violations and to 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 Egypt, the Permanent Mission of Lebanon and the Permanent Mission of Türkiye, in Geneva. Another letter expressing similar concerns will also 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