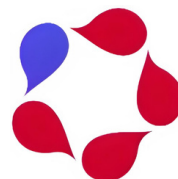


2024

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT UAE

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**Washington Center
For Human Rights**

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Executive Summary

In 2024, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) faced significant human rights challenges, particularly in the areas of freedom of expression, assembly, and association. The government continued to suppress dissent, detaining activists, academics, and lawyers under broadly defined charges, often following trials lacking in fairness. A notable instance was the mass trial of over 80 defendants, many of whom were already serving sentences from prior convictions. This trial was marred by serious due process concerns, including allegations of torture and ill-treatment, and a lack of transparency.

Migrant workers in the UAE remained at high risk of exploitation, facing conditions tantamount to forced labor, wage theft, and inadequate protection from extreme heat. The kafala (sponsorship) system, which ties workers to their employers, perpetuated these abuses, leaving workers vulnerable and without adequate recourse.

The UAE's involvement in military operations in Yemen persisted, with little accountability for human rights violations linked to these actions. Despite the country hosting the COP28 climate summit, there was minimal progress on climate policies, especially those aimed at protecting migrant workers from climate-related risks.

Methodology

Data Collection

The data for the human rights report on the UAE in 2024 was collected using a combination of methods:

- **Interviews:** Conducted with human rights defenders, lawyers, and activists both within the UAE and in exile to gather firsthand accounts of abuses and legal proceedings[1].
- **Field Research:** Due to access restrictions within the UAE, direct field research was limited. However, researchers employed indirect methods, such as remote interviews and the analysis of satellite imagery, to evaluate certain conditions[2].
- **Reports from Local NGOs:** Despite operating under significant constraints, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provided valuable information on human rights conditions. Their reports were crucial, though often cross-verified with international sources to account for potential biases or omissions[3].
- **Government Publications and Media Reports:** Official statements, legal documents, and reports from state-controlled media were analyzed to understand the legal framework and government actions. These sources were treated cautiously due to potential state censorship and propaganda[4].
- **International NGO Reports:** Reports from international human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, were essential in providing a broader context and verifying local findings[1][5].

Sources

The report relied on various credible sources to ensure data accuracy and verification:

- **Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International:** These organizations offered in-depth and comprehensive reports on the human rights situation in the UAE[1][5].
- **U.S. Department of State and Other Foreign Government Reports:** These documents provided valuable insights into the international community's perspective on the UAE's human rights practices[2].
- **Local Media and Government Publications:** Despite the challenges posed by censorship, these sources were used to corroborate information obtained from other channels[4].

Limitations

Several challenges were encountered during the data collection process:

- **Restricted Access:** The research team faced significant barriers in accessing certain areas within the UAE, which limited the ability to conduct on-the-ground investigations[2].

- **Surveillance and Censorship:** The pervasive surveillance and strict censorship within the UAE posed risks to both researchers and their sources, affecting the willingness of individuals to provide information. This necessitated a high level of caution in source selection and verification[3].
- **Reliability of Local Sources:** Given the government's control over media and the restrictions placed on NGOs, some local sources were not entirely reliable. To mitigate this, information was cross-verified with reports from international organizations[3][5].

These limitations highlight the challenges in obtaining a complete and accurate picture of the human rights situation in the UAE. However, efforts were made to mitigate these challenges through the triangulation of data from multiple sources.

Human Rights Overview

Political Context

The political landscape of the UAE in 2024 continues to be defined by its authoritarian governance structure, where power remains concentrated within the ruling families of the individual emirates. The UAE has maintained a strategy of projecting an image of progressiveness and tolerance on the international stage while enforcing a zero-tolerance policy towards dissent at home[1]. Events such as hosting COP28 in 2023 were leveraged to enhance the country's global image but did not result in significant improvements in human rights practices[1]. The government continues to detain activists, academics, and lawyers under vague charges, with many still held beyond their sentences from the notorious "UAE94" mass trial, reflecting ongoing repression of freedom of expression and association[1].

Economic and Social Context

Economically, the UAE is one of the wealthiest nations in the region, with substantial investments in infrastructure and technology. However, the economic benefits are not equally shared, particularly among migrant workers who constitute a large portion of the workforce. These workers continue to face widespread abuses, including forced labor conditions and inadequate protection from extreme climate conditions[1][4]. The kafala (sponsorship) system remains a significant obstacle to securing migrant workers' rights, despite some legislative reforms aimed at improving their situation[4]. On the social front, while the UAE promotes cultural tolerance through initiatives like the Abrahamic Family House, discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and race persists, often in less visible forms[4].

Significant Events

In 2023, the UAE hosted the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), which was a major event intended to boost its international standing[1]. Despite this, there was no accountability for human rights abuses associated with the UAE's military involvement in Yemen, nor was there significant progress in addressing domestic human rights concerns[1]. During the fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle in 2024, the UAE received 323 recommendations for human rights reforms but accepted only 198, demonstrating a limited commitment to comprehensive changes[3].

Overall, the human rights situation in the UAE in 2024 remains concerning, characterized by severe restrictions on freedoms, ongoing abuses against migrant workers, and challenges to judicial independence. The broader political and economic contexts in the country continue to exacerbate these issues, with limited reforms and continued centralization of power shaping the human rights landscape.

Citations

- [1] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/united-arab-emirates>
- [2] <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/country/united-arab-emirates-topical>
- [3] <https://www.adhrb.org/2024/06/human-rights-in-the-uae-insights-from-the-fourth-universal-periodic-review/>
- [4] <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/ARE>
- [5] <https://freedomhouse.org/country/united-arab-emirates/freedom-world/2024>

Key Human Rights Issues

In 2024, the human rights landscape in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was characterized by significant challenges across various domains, reflecting both longstanding and emerging concerns. The country's legal and political frameworks continued to impose severe restrictions on civil and political rights, while specific groups, including women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and minorities, faced systemic discrimination and unequal access to justice and resources. Despite some advancements in economic, social, and cultural rights, deep-seated inequalities persisted, particularly affecting migrant workers and other vulnerable populations. This section explores the key human rights issues in the UAE, offering a comprehensive overview of the current situation and the ongoing struggles for reform and equity.

1- Civil and Political Rights in UAE 2024

Freedom of Expression and Assembly

In 2024, the UAE continued to impose stringent restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly. The government relied on laws such as the Cybercrime Law and Penal Code to criminalize dissent, with offenses including "insulting the ruler" and "endangering state security" being broadly defined[1]. These laws are used to suppress public criticism and maintain strict control over public discourse. Surveillance technologies, including advanced monitoring of both physical spaces and online activities, further eroded privacy and freedom of expression[4]. Public protests and assemblies were heavily restricted, and security forces responded to any signs of dissent with force[3].

Arbitrary Arrests and Detentions

Arbitrary arrests and detentions remained widespread, particularly targeting activists, academics, and political dissidents. Notably, the UAE conducted a mass trial involving at least 84 defendants, with sentences ranging from 15 years to life imprisonment. This trial faced criticism for serious due process violations, including restricted access to legal counsel and allegations of coerced confessions[3]. Many individuals from the "UAE94" case continued to face detention beyond their original sentences under counterterrorism pretexts[4]. Prominent detainees, such as Ahmed Mansoor, remained imprisoned under harsh conditions, including solitary confinement, due to their human rights advocacy[5].

Torture and Ill-Treatment

Reports of torture and ill-treatment in UAE detention centers persisted throughout 2024. Detainees often endured severe conditions, including prolonged solitary confinement and denial of basic rights like access to legal representation[5]. Allegations of torture were prevalent, particularly in the context of mass trials where confessions were reportedly extracted under duress[3]. Despite international calls for reform, the UAE has yet to ratify the Optional Protocol

to the UN Convention against Torture, and independent monitoring mechanisms remain absent[1].

Overall, the civil and political rights situation in the UAE in 2024 was marked by severe restrictions on freedoms, widespread arbitrary detentions, and ongoing reports of torture. These issues have drawn significant international criticism and calls for reform, yet substantial changes remain limited.

Citations:

[1]

<https://www.adhrb.org/2024/06/human-rights-in-the-uae-insights-from-the-fourth-universal-periodic-review/>

[2] <https://freedomhouse.org/country/united-arab-emirates/freedom-world/2024>

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[4] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/united-arab-emirates>

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_the_United_Arab_Emirates

Rights of Specific Groups in UAE 2024

Women's Rights

In 2024, the situation for women in the UAE presents a mix of progress and ongoing challenges. The UAE government has undertaken initiatives to promote women's empowerment, including the establishment of the UAE Gender Balance Council and policies aimed at increasing female participation in the workforce and politics. Notably, women now hold 50% of the seats in the Federal National Council[3]. However, significant legal and social barriers persist. Women remain under male guardianship laws, which restrict their autonomy in personal matters such as marriage, divorce, and child custody[1][4]. Despite recent amendments to the Federal Personal Status Law, women still require a husband's permission for certain actions, and marital rape is not criminalized[1]. Gender-based violence and discrimination remain prevalent, with limited legal recourse available for victims[4].

Children's Rights

Children in the UAE generally benefit from access to education and healthcare. However, there are notable challenges, particularly for children of migrant workers. While child labor is not widespread, the lack of legal protections for migrant families can affect children's rights to education and healthcare[1]. Additionally, the legal framework requires that parents be married to register their children, leaving children born out of wedlock vulnerable to legal and social disadvantages[1].

LGBTQ+ Rights

LGBTQ+ individuals in the UAE face severe legal and social discrimination. Homosexuality is criminalized under the penal code, which also criminalizes consensual nonmarital sex—disproportionately impacting LGBTQ+ individuals who cannot legally marry[1]. There are no legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and reports of violence and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people are common[1]. The government's response to these issues remains minimal, contributing to an environment of widespread social intolerance.

Minority Rights

Ethnic and religious minorities, including non-Muslim expatriates, face various forms of discrimination in the UAE. The legal system often privileges Muslim citizens, and non-Muslims are subject to different personal status laws, affecting their rights in areas such as marriage and inheritance[1]. Migrant workers, who constitute a significant portion of the population, experience widespread labor abuses and have limited access to legal protections[1]. While the

UAE has made efforts to promote religious tolerance, such as through the establishment of the Abrahamic Family House, systemic inequalities and discrimination persist[1].

Overall, despite some advancements, significant legal and social challenges remain for women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and minority groups in the UAE. Progress has been made in certain areas, but substantial issues continue to impact the rights and freedoms of these groups.

Citations:

- [1] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/united-arab-emirates>
- [2] <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/The-Ministry/The-Foreign-Policy/Women-rights>
- [3] <https://www.pchr.gov.ae/en/priority-details/gender-equality-and-women-s-empowerment>
- [4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_the_United_Arab_Emirates
- [5] <https://wbl.worldbank.org/content/dam/documents/wbl/2024/pilot/WBL24-2-0-United-arab-emirates.pdf>

Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in UAE 2024

Right to Health

The UAE's healthcare system is well-developed and offers advanced medical facilities and services. However, access to healthcare remains uneven, particularly disadvantaging migrant workers. The kafala system, which ties workers' residency and employment status to their employer, creates significant barriers to accessing healthcare[1]. Many migrant workers face inadequate health insurance coverage and employer-imposed restrictions, resulting in delays or denial of essential medical care. While the UAE's healthcare policies are progressive in theory, they fail to effectively address these systemic inequities, leaving a substantial portion of the population underserved[2][4].

Right to Education

Education in the UAE reflects considerable investment and high literacy rates, yet there are stark disparities in access. Emirati citizens benefit from free, high-quality education, but children of migrant workers often encounter obstacles such as high tuition fees and restrictive residency requirements[3][4]. Although there are initiatives aimed at improving educational access for non-citizens, these efforts are insufficient to close the gap, resulting in limited opportunities for many children of migrant workers. This disparity perpetuates cycles of inequality and affects the overall educational advancement of the migrant community[1][4].

Right to Adequate Housing

The rapid urban development in the UAE has led to improved housing conditions for many Emirati citizens. However, low-income migrant workers face severe housing issues. They often live in overcrowded and substandard accommodations provided by their employers, with limited avenues for improvement due to lax enforcement of housing regulations[2][3]. The legal status of many migrant workers exacerbates their vulnerability to poor living conditions, including homelessness and forced evictions. Despite some regulatory efforts to improve housing standards, enforcement remains weak, and the issues faced by migrant workers are often overlooked in policy-making[1][3].

Overall, while the UAE has achieved some progress in economic, social, and cultural rights, significant systemic issues persist. Disparities in access to healthcare, education, and housing highlight deep-seated inequalities, especially affecting non-citizens and migrant workers. Government policies and reforms have not adequately addressed these issues, underscoring the need for comprehensive changes to ensure equitable access to essential rights for all residents.

Citations:

- [1] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/united-arab-emirates>
- [2] <https://www.adhrb.org/2024/06/human-rights-in-the-uae-insights-from-the-fourth-universal-periodic-review/>
- [3] <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/ARE>
- [4] <https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/The-Ministry/The-Foreign-Policy/Women-rights>

Refugees and Migrants

The situation of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) during 2024 presents a complex landscape marked by ongoing challenges and responses from both the government and international organizations.

Treatment and Living Conditions

The UAE continues to be a significant destination for migrant workers, who comprise approximately 87.9% of the total population. Despite recent reforms aimed at improving labor rights, many migrant workers, particularly those in low-income positions, remain vulnerable to exploitation and poor living conditions. Reports indicate that these workers often face overcrowded accommodations, inadequate access to healthcare, and insufficient labor protections. The kafala system, which ties workers' residency to their employers, has been criticized for perpetuating power imbalances that enable abuse and exploitation.

Living conditions for many migrant workers have deteriorated, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many workers have become homeless due to job losses and lack of support from employers, with no shelters available for those in need. This situation has left many struggling to meet basic needs, such as food and rent.

Access to Asylum Procedures

The UAE does not have a formal asylum system, which complicates the situation for refugees and asylum seekers. The country generally respects the principle of non-refoulement but lacks a structured process for asylum applications. As of 2024, the number of refugees in the UAE was reported to be around 1,399, with a small number of asylum seekers, primarily from conflict zones like Afghanistan.

A significant issue has arisen concerning Afghan asylum seekers, with reports indicating that at least 2,400 individuals are being arbitrarily detained in poor conditions at facilities such as Emirates Humanitarian City. These detainees face restrictions on their freedom, inadequate access to legal assistance, and a lack of educational opportunities for children. Human Rights Watch has highlighted the dire living conditions, describing them as "cramped" and akin to a prison environment.

Instances of Exploitation or Abuse

Exploitation of migrant workers remains a critical concern. Reports indicate that many workers experience wage theft, excessive working hours, and unsafe working conditions. Although some labor reforms have been implemented, enforcement remains inconsistent, and many workers continue to face challenges in reporting abuses without fear of retaliation. The disparity between

improved legal frameworks and the actual conditions faced by workers is stark, with many protections still not effectively applied, particularly for domestic workers.

International and Domestic Responses

Internationally, organizations such as the UNHCR and IOM have been involved in addressing the needs of refugees and migrants in the UAE. The UAE has endorsed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, indicating a commitment to international standards. However, the effectiveness of these commitments in practice is often questioned due to the lack of a comprehensive asylum system and ongoing reports of human rights abuses.

Domestically, there have been calls for further reforms to labor laws and protections for migrant workers, but progress has been slow. The government has stated that it is working with the US to resettle Afghan evacuees, but many remain in limbo, facing significant challenges in their daily lives.

In conclusion, while the UAE plays a role in hosting refugees and a large migrant workforce, significant challenges persist regarding their treatment, living conditions, and access to legal protections. Continued advocacy and reform efforts are necessary to improve the situation for these vulnerable populations.

Citations:

[1]

https://mena.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl686/files/documents/2024-05/pub2023-047-l-world-migration-report-2024_1.pdf

[2] <https://migrants-refugees.va/country-profile/united-arab-emirates/>

[3] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-64963423>

[4] <https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/ARE/uae/refugee-statistics>

[5]

<https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/60599/file/ICMPD%2520Migration%2520Outlook%25202024.pdf>

Legal Framework and Accountability

The legal framework and accountability mechanisms related to human rights in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are characterized by a complex interplay of legislation, state policies, and judicial practices. Despite some reforms aimed at improving human rights, significant challenges remain, particularly regarding freedom of expression, assembly, and the treatment of detainees.

Legal Framework

The UAE has made strides in establishing a legal framework for human rights, including the formation of the National Human Rights Authority in December 2020, which aims to protect human rights at regional and international levels . The UAE has ratified several international human rights conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child . However, the country is not a signatory to several key international human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which limits its accountability under international law .

In recent years, the UAE has enacted reforms, such as the overhaul of its penal code in November 2020, which included the elimination of corporal punishment and reduced penalties for honor killings . Despite these changes, laws that restrict freedom of expression remain in place, with severe penalties for criticism of the government or its officials .

Accountability Mechanisms

The judiciary in the UAE operates under a dual legal system, comprising both civil and Sharia law. However, the independence of the judiciary is often questioned, as the government exerts significant influence over judicial proceedings, particularly in politically sensitive cases. Reports indicate that many activists and dissidents are subjected to unfair trials and lengthy sentences on vague charges, often related to their expression of dissent .

The Permanent Committee for Human Rights (PCHR) serves as a national mechanism for reporting and following up on human rights issues in the UAE . However, the effectiveness of such bodies is undermined by the lack of genuine independence and the government's control over human rights discourse.

Impunity for Human Rights Violations

Impunity for human rights violations remains a critical issue in the UAE. Despite international calls for accountability, there have been few, if any, prosecutions of officials for abuses, particularly in cases related to the military operations in Yemen or the treatment of detainees . High-profile cases, such as that of Ahmed Mansoor, a prominent human rights defender imprisoned since 2017, illustrate the lack of accountability for human rights violations.

Mansoor's continued detention, despite international pressure for his release, reflects a broader pattern of repression against dissenters.

Moreover, the mass trial of the "UAE94," which involved the detention of numerous government critics, has drawn significant condemnation for its unfairness and the prolonged detention of individuals who have completed their sentences . As of 2023, at least 51 prisoners from this case remained incarcerated without legal justification, highlighting the issue of arbitrary detention and the state's disregard for legal norms .

Recent Developments

In 2024, the UAE continued to suppress dissent, with reports of individuals being detained for social media posts criticizing government policies or expressing solidarity with international causes . The government's approach to dissent has been characterized by a zero-tolerance policy, resulting in the arbitrary detention of both nationals and expatriates .

Despite the establishment of human rights mechanisms, the overall environment for human rights in the UAE remains restrictive. The lack of accountability for abuses, combined with stringent laws against free expression, underscores the ongoing challenges faced by human rights advocates in the country.

In summary, while there have been some legislative reforms aimed at improving human rights in the UAE, the effectiveness of these measures is severely compromised by the government's repressive policies and the judiciary's lack of independence. The persistent issue of impunity for human rights violations continues to undermine the legal framework designed to protect individuals' rights.

Citations:

[1] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/united-arab-emirates>

[2] <https://www.uae-embassy.org/discover-uae/society/human-rights>

[3]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/united-arab-emirates/report-united-arab-emirates/>

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_the_United_Arab_Emirates

[5] <https://www.pchr.gov.ae>

International Relations and Human Rights

In 2024, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) navigated a challenging international landscape regarding human rights, marked by its active participation in UN bodies, engagement with international organizations, and the mounting pressure it faced due to concerns over its human rights record.

Engagement with International Bodies

Throughout 2024, the UAE continued its term as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, which it had secured for the 2022-2024 period. This position allowed the UAE to project its narrative of human rights progress on a global stage. The UAE highlighted its ratification of various international human rights treaties, focusing on areas such as women's rights, children's rights, and the elimination of racial discrimination. These actions were part of the UAE's broader strategy to portray itself as a progressive and modern state committed to upholding international human rights standards .

However, the UAE's human rights record remained under intense scrutiny. The country hosted the COP28 climate summit in December 2023, a high-profile event that provided an opportunity to showcase its commitment to global issues like climate change. Yet, this period also saw significant domestic repression, including a mass trial of 84 defendants, many of whom were already incarcerated for their human rights advocacy. Critics argued that these trials lacked due process and were politically motivated, raising serious questions about the UAE's adherence to international human rights obligations .

International Pressure and Sanctions

The UAE's human rights practices, particularly concerning the treatment of political dissidents and migrant workers, drew considerable international criticism in 2024. Organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International reported widespread abuses, including arbitrary detention and severe restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly. These reports highlighted the continued incarceration of prisoners of conscience, with at least 26 individuals remaining in detention solely for their political beliefs .

In July 2024, the situation escalated when the Abu Dhabi Federal Appeals Court sentenced several defendants from the mass trial to lengthy prison terms, ranging from 15 years to life. The trial was widely condemned for significant due process violations, including restricted access to legal representation and allegations of torture. These developments led to renewed calls from international human rights organizations for sanctions against UAE officials responsible for these abuses .

Impact on Domestic Human Rights Situation

The international scrutiny and pressure have had a mixed impact on the UAE's domestic human rights situation. While the UAE government continued to promote its image as a progressive state, the reality for many human rights defenders remained dire. High-profile activists like Ahmed Mansoor, imprisoned for years due to his advocacy, exemplified the harsh consequences faced by those who challenge the government . The UAE's approach to human rights was further complicated by its treatment of migrant workers, who make up a significant portion of the population. These workers continued to face exploitation and inadequate protections, particularly in extreme weather conditions. The UAE's labor laws were criticized for failing to provide sufficient safeguards, prompting calls for reform from both domestic and international observers .

In summary, while the UAE engaged actively with international human rights frameworks and sought to present itself as a model of progress, the reality on the ground painted a different picture. The ongoing international pressure, coupled with high-profile cases of repression, underscored the challenges the UAE faced in aligning its domestic practices with its international commitments. While some reforms might be influenced by this pressure, significant human rights challenges persisted within the country.

Citations

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- [2] <https://www.uae-embassy.org/discover-uae/society/human-rights>
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- [4] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/united-arab-emirates/report-united-arab-emirates/>
- [5] <https://www.pchr.gov.ae/en/priority-details/international-cooperation>

Recommendations

Based on the findings from 2024, the following recommendations are made to address the human rights violations in the United Arab Emirates:

1. Release All Political Prisoners:

Immediately and unconditionally release all activists, dissidents, and human rights defenders detained for exercising their rights to free expression, association, and assembly. This includes individuals detained under cases like "UAE94" and "UAE84."

2. Reform Repressive Legislation:

Amend laws that violate human rights, such as the 2014 counterterrorism law, which has been misused to target activists and dissidents. Ensure that all laws align with international human rights standards.

3. Ensure Fair Trials and Legal Protections:

Guarantee that all detainees have access to legal counsel, are protected from torture and ill-treatment, and receive fair trials that meet international standards. Implement measures to prevent arbitrary detention, particularly the practice of holding prisoners beyond their sentences.

4. Judicial Independence:

Establish an independent judiciary free from political influence. This should include measures to protect judges from retaliation and ensure that judicial decisions are based solely on the law.

5. Protect Migrant Workers' Rights:

Abolish the kafala sponsorship system and replace it with a system that guarantees migrant workers' rights. Ensure adequate wages, decent working conditions, and access to effective remedies for abuses.

6. Ratify International Human Rights Treaties:

Sign and ratify key international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Implement these treaties in domestic law.

To the International Community

1. Condemn Human Rights Abuses:

Publicly condemn human rights abuses in the UAE, particularly the unfair trials and harsh sentences of activists and dissidents. Highlight these issues in international forums such as the UN Human Rights Council.

2. Leverage Diplomatic and Economic Pressure:

Use diplomatic channels and economic leverage to press the UAE government to implement these recommendations. Consider targeted sanctions on officials responsible for human rights violations.

3. Support Civil Society and Human Rights Defenders:

Provide financial, technical, and moral support to UAE-based civil society groups and human rights defenders. Offer asylum and resettlement options for those at risk of persecution.

4. Halt Extraditions to the UAE:

Refrain from extraditing or deporting individuals to the UAE where they may face arbitrary detention, unfair trials, and torture. Ensure that international agreements do not facilitate human rights violations.

To Civil Society Organizations:

1. Continue Monitoring and Reporting:

Intensify efforts to document and report human rights violations in the UAE, utilizing international mechanisms like the UN Human Rights Council. Work to ensure that these reports reach a global audience.

2. Provide Support to Victims:

Offer legal aid, psychological support, and rehabilitation services to victims of human rights abuses in the UAE. Facilitate connections to international bodies that can offer additional assistance.

3. Advocate for Legal and Policy Reforms:

Actively campaign for the implementation of the above recommendations at national, regional, and international levels. Use strategic litigation and advocacy to push for policy changes in the UAE.

4. Build Coalitions and Partnerships:

Strengthen alliances with other civil society organizations, both within the UAE and globally, to increase the impact of advocacy efforts. Coordinate campaigns to amplify the demand for human rights reforms.

By implementing these recommendations, the UAE government, the international community, and civil society organizations can address the country's pressing human rights challenges and work toward a society that respects and upholds human dignity and justice.

Conclusion

The human rights situation in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) remains deeply concerning in 2024, with the government's persistent repression of dissent and ongoing failure to address widespread abuses. The key issues highlighted in this report demonstrate the urgent need for continued scrutiny and action to improve the human rights landscape in the country. The UAE has imprisoned numerous activists, academics, and lawyers on vague charges for exercising their basic rights to free expression and association. The arbitrary detention of over 2,400 Afghans in inhumane conditions for more than 15 months further underscores the government's disregard for human rights. The use of advanced surveillance technologies to monitor and censor online activity is another example of the severe restrictions imposed on freedom of expression.

Migrant workers, particularly those employed in outdoor labor, face significant risks and abuses, exacerbated by escalating climate challenges. Despite commitments to combat climate change, the UAE's policies have fallen short, contributing to ongoing climate injustice and neglect of workers' rights. The UAE government has also failed to hold accountable those responsible for abuses related to its military operations in Yemen. Additionally, the government's obstruction of international human rights organizations and UN experts from independently investigating abuses highlights the lack of transparency and accountability. The arbitrary detention of prisoners of conscience, coupled with severe restrictions on their communication with families, remains a critical concern. The recent mass trial of over 80 Emiratis in 2023 exemplifies the continued use of unfair legal processes to suppress dissent.

The UAE's repressive policies and ongoing human rights violations demand sustained attention and action from the international community. It is imperative for governments, international organizations, and human rights defenders to persist in their efforts to hold the UAE accountable for its actions. The immediate and unconditional release of all individuals detained solely for exercising their rights, the cessation of torture and abuse, and comprehensive legal reforms are essential steps toward aligning the UAE's practices with international human rights standards. Meaningful progress in improving the UAE's human rights record can only be achieved through relentless pressure, advocacy, and a commitment to justice. The international community must continue to stand in solidarity with those affected by these abuses, ensuring that their voices are heard and their rights are upheld.

Appendices

Appendix A: Statistical Data on Human Rights Issues

1. Detained Activists and Dissidents

- Total Number of Detained Activists: Approximately 51 individuals from the "UAE94" case remain imprisoned beyond their sentences as of March 2023 .
- Recent Sentencing: In July 2024, the Abu Dhabi Federal Appeals Court sentenced 44 individuals to prison terms ranging from 15 years to life in a mass trial related to human rights activism .

2. Migrant Workers' Rights Violations

- Number of Migrant Workers: Over 250,000 foreign laborers in Dubai face significant human rights abuses, including poor living conditions .
- Arbitrary Detention: Between 2,400 and 2,700 Afghans have been detained in "Emirates Humanitarian City" for over 15 months following their evacuation from Afghanistan .

3. Freedom of Expression and Assembly

Reported Cases of Censorship: The UAE employs advanced surveillance technologies to monitor citizens, leading to significant restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly .

4. Prison Conditions

Prisoner Communication Restrictions: Authorities have severely restricted communication for at least 26 prisoners of conscience with their families .

Appendix B: Glossary of Legal and Human Rights Terms

Arbitrary Detention:

The arrest and detention of individuals without sufficient legal cause or due process.

Counterterrorism Law:

Legislation aimed at preventing terrorism, often criticized for being used to suppress dissent and target political opponents.

Dissident:

An individual who actively challenges an established doctrine, policy, or institution, particularly in a political context.

Freedom of Expression:

The right to express one's opinions publicly without censorship or restraint by the government.

Human Rights Defender:

An individual who works, often at great personal risk, to protect or promote human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mass Trial:

A legal proceeding in which multiple defendants are tried together, often criticized for lacking individual justice and due process.

Political Prisoner:

A person imprisoned for their political beliefs, actions, or affiliations rather than any criminal offense.

Surveillance:

The monitoring of behavior, activities, or information for the purpose of influencing, managing, directing, or protecting people, often by government authorities.