

ADVOCACY DOSSIER

SHEIKH MOHAMMED ABDULRAZZAQ AL-SIDDIQ

محمد عبد الرزاق الصديق

Imprisoned (serving sentence) **United Arab Emirates**

HuMENA.

Scholar, former lecturer, member of the Al-Islah society. Signed a 2011 petition for democratic reform. Arrested 2012, sentenced in the UAE94 mass trial, re-sentenced to life imprisonment in 2024 after completing his first sentence.

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THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Scholar, former lecturer, member of the Al-Islah society. Signed a 2011 petition for democratic reform. Arrested 2012, sentenced in the UAE94 mass trial, re-sentenced to life imprisonment in 2024 after completing his first sentence.

STATUS	**Imprisoned (serving sentence)**
ARRESTED	**9 Apr 2012**
COUNTRY	**United Arab Emirates**
SENTENCE	**Life imprisonment (25 years under UAE law), handed down in July 2024 following retrial. Originally sentenced in July 2013 to ten years' imprisonment plus three years' probation.**
CHARGES	**Founding, organizing, and administering an organization aimed at overthrowing the government (2013 trial)** **Establishing, founding, and managing the Justice and Dignity Committee with the aim of committing terrorist acts (2024 retrial)**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Release Sheikh Mohammed Al-Siddiq immediately and unconditionally.

02 Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights.

03 Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention.

04 Provide Sheikh Mohammed Al-Siddiq with immediate, independent medical evaluation and the full treatment that condition requires, including transfer to an independent civilian hospital if necessary.

05 Immediately end all harassment, summons, surveillance, and threats against the family of Sheikh Mohammed Al-Siddiq in United Arab Emirates.

Latest updates on this case
Scan the code or visit:
https://humena.org/defenders/sheikh-mohammed-al-siddiq/

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DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Arbitrary detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9
Denial of family visits	UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), Rule 58
Denial of legal counsel	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(3)
Denial of medical care	UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), Rules 24 to 27
Deprivation of nationality	Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 15
Enforced disappearance	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Article 2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 9, 16
Inhumane detention conditions	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 10 UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules)
Judicial harassment	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12
Prolonged pretrial detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3)
Reprisal against relatives	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12
Torture	Convention against Torture, Articles 1, 2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 7
Unfair trial	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

03

HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

3 March 2011

DEFENDER ACTIVITY

Signs petition for democratic reform

Al-Siddiq is one of 133 signatories to a petition addressed to the UAE President and Federal Supreme Council calling for legislative reforms and fair elections to the National Assembly.

4 December 2011

CITIZENSHIP REVOKED

Citizenship revoked without a court order

The UAE authorities revoked Al-Siddiq's citizenship by decree, together with six other Emiratis, without a court order.

9 April 2012

ARREST

Arrested by state security

Al-Siddiq is arrested as part of the crackdown on signatories of the 2011 petition. He is told he can leave the country or stay and face charges; he chooses to stay.

November 2012

CONTEXT

First family visit after months in secret detention

After about eight months in solitary confinement at a secret location, Al-Siddiq's family saw him for the first time at the Public Prosecution office.

27 January 2013

CHARGE FILED

Formal charges filed

The Federal Supreme Court charges Al-Siddiq and 93 other defendants with founding, organizing, and administering an organization aimed at overthrowing the government under article 180 of the penal code.

4 March 2013

HEARING

First court appearance

Al-Siddiq appears in court for the first time in the UAE94 trial after months of incommunicado detention. He is denied legal representation.

2 July 2013

CONVICTION

Convicted and sentenced

The Federal Supreme Court convicts Al-Siddiq and sentences him to ten years' imprisonment followed by three years' probation.

22 November 2013

CONTEXT

UN body finds UAE94 detention arbitrary

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, in Opinion 60/2013, found the detention of the UAE94 defendants, including Al-Siddiq, arbitrary.

7 March 2016

CONTEXT

Three children stripped of citizenship

Three of Al-Siddiq's adult children were told at the migration department in Sharjah that a decree had revoked their Emirati citizenship, leaving them stateless.

2018

CONTEXT

Contact with family cut

The authorities cut all communication between Al-Siddiq and his immediate family.

March 2020

FAMILY VISIT DENIED

Family visits suspended

Authorities bar Al-Siddiq's family from visiting him in Al-Razeen prison, despite protective glass barriers between detainees and visitors.

19 June 2021

CONTEXT

Daughter Alaa Al-Siddiq dies in exile

His daughter Alaa Al-Siddiq, executive director of the rights group ALQST, who lived in exile, died in a car crash in the United Kingdom. He was not allowed to attend her funeral, and she was buried in Qatar.

April 2022

DETENTION BEYOND THE END OF A SENTENCE

Detention extended indefinitely

Al-Siddiq's ten-year sentence expires, but authorities extend his detention indefinitely under the pretext of 'rehabilitation needs,' invoking the Counter-Terrorism Law and Munasaha Centre Law.

30 March 2023

CONTEXT

UN body finds Munasaha detention arbitrary

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that the continued detention of 12 UAE94 prisoners in Munasaha after the end of their sentences, including Al-Siddiq, is arbitrary.

7 December 2023

HEARING

Retrial begins in UAE84 case

A new mass trial begins before the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal. Al-Siddiq is retried on new terrorism charges related to the alleged founding of the Justice and Dignity Committee.

10 July 2024

CONVICTION

Sentenced to life imprisonment

The Abu Dhabi Federal Appeals Court sentences Al-Siddiq to life imprisonment (25 years under UAE law) for allegedly founding the Justice and Dignity Committee with the aim of committing terrorist acts.

30 July 2024

CONTEXT

UN experts dismayed by UAE84 life sentences

UN experts said they were dismayed by the life sentences handed down in the UAE84 case, including against Al-Siddiq.

4 March 2025

FINAL JUDGMENT

Federal Supreme Court makes the sentence final

The State Security Chamber of the Federal Supreme Court rejected the appeals in the UAE84 case. The judgment is final.

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THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Sheikh Mohammed Al-Siddiq was born in 1964 and became a prominent religious scholar and educator in the UAE. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sharia from UAE University and a Master's degree in Jurisprudence from the Sharia College in Riyadh. From 2001 to 2007, he taught in the Department of Jurisprudence at the University of Sharjah. He served on the boards of several Sharia bodies in Islamic financial institutions and was a member of the International Union of Muslim Scholars and the Association of Sharia Scholars within the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Al-Siddiq founded and led the Afaq Development Foundation for Studies and Consultations in Dubai and directed the Dar Al-Khairat Foundation. He supervised the Zayed Center for Quran Memorization and hosted television programs for Sharjah TV. His academic and community contributions earned him the Citizens on the Path to Excellence award and the Rashid Award for Academic Excellence.

Al-Siddiq was a member of Al-Islah, a civil society organization founded in 1974 that advocates reform. On 3 March 2011, he was one of 133 signatories to a petition addressed to the President of the UAE and the Federal Supreme Council calling for legislative reforms, universal suffrage, and the election of the Federal National Council by direct ballot.

Citizenship Revocation and Arrest

On 4 December 2011, the UAE authorities revoked Al-Siddiq's citizenship without judicial order, accusing him of actions deemed a threat to state sovereignty. On 9 April 2012, state security officers arrested him as part of a campaign targeting signatories of the 2011 petition. At the time of his arrest, he was given a choice: leave the country or remain and face prosecution. He chose to stay.

Following his arrest, Al-Siddiq was subjected to enforced disappearance. He was held incommunicado for months, during which he was tortured. He was severely beaten and received death threats. He was held for about eight months in solitary confinement at a secret location. His family first saw him in November 2012, at the Public Prosecution office.

The UAE94 Trial and First Sentence

On 4 March 2013, Al-Siddiq appeared in court for the first time along with 93 other defendants in what became known as the UAE94 trial. The Federal Supreme Court charged the 94 defendants on 27 January 2013 with founding, organizing, and administering an organization aimed at overthrowing the government, under article 180 of the penal code. Al-Siddiq was denied legal representation. He was permitted only limited presence in court proceedings.

On 2 July 2013, the court convicted 61 of the 94 defendants. Al-Siddiq was sentenced to ten years'

imprisonment followed by three years of probation. He was transferred to Al-Razeen prison in Abu Dhabi, where he has been held ever since.

Detention Conditions and Health

Throughout his detention, Al-Siddiq has been subjected to prolonged solitary confinement. He was kept handcuffed and shackled for extended periods, deprived of access to a bathroom, and denied adequate healthcare. He suffers from diabetes, a chronic condition requiring a special diet and medication. Poor nutrition in detention caused significant weight loss and deterioration of his health.

Authorities confiscated his personal belongings, including books, pens, and paper, and prohibited him from practicing religious rituals. When his daughter Alaa Al-Siddiq, a rights defender living in exile, died in a car crash in the United Kingdom in June 2021, he was not allowed to attend her funeral, and she was buried in Qatar. He has been isolated from his family for years. Since March 2020, his family has been barred from visiting him in prison, despite the installation of protective glass barriers between detainees and visitors. Since 2018, the authorities have cut his communication with his immediate family.

In March 2016, three of Al-Siddiq's adult children were told that a decree had stripped them of their Emirati citizenship. His family was denied passport renewals and other official documentation, effectively cutting them off from access to education and other social rights.

Indefinite Detention and the UAE84 Retrial

Al-Siddiq's ten-year sentence was due to expire in April 2022. Instead of releasing him, the authorities extended his detention indefinitely under the pretext of "rehabilitation needs," invoking the UAE's Counter-Terrorism Law and the Munasaha Centre Law. The Munasaha Centre is a so-called counseling facility used to detain individuals beyond the end of their sentences without judicial review.

On 7 December 2023, a new mass trial began before the Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal. Al-Siddiq was retried on new terrorism charges. He was accused of establishing, founding, and managing the Justice and Dignity Committee, allegedly with the aim of committing terrorist acts on UAE soil. On 10 July 2024, the Abu Dhabi Federal Appeals Court sentenced Al-Siddiq to life imprisonment, which under UAE law is equivalent to 25 years. The trial, known as the UAE84 case, resulted in sentences ranging from ten years to life for 53 defendants. It was the UAE's second-largest mass trial and violated international fair-trial standards.

International Response

The UAE94 and UAE84 trials have been condemned by international human rights organizations as politically motivated prosecutions targeting peaceful advocates for democratic reform. Al-Siddiq's indefinite detention beyond the end of his original sentence, his re-prosecution on new charges after serving his time, and the denial of fair-trial guarantees have been condemned as violations of international fair-trial standards. In November 2013 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found the detention of the UAE94 defendants, including Al-Siddiq, arbitrary, and in March 2023 it found his

continued detention in Munasaha arbitrary. In July 2024 UN experts said they were dismayed by the life sentences in the UAE84 case. His case remains emblematic of the UAE's systematic suppression of civil society and dissent.

05

SAMPLE LETTER

Copy it, adapt it and send it from your own address.

Your Excellency,

I am writing to demand the immediate release of Sheikh Mohammed Al-Siddiq, religious scholar and human rights advocate; former lecturer in Islamic jurisprudence; member of the Al-Islah society, currently detained in United Arab Emirates since 9 April 2012, and an end to all reprisals tied to this case.

In brief: Scholar, former lecturer, member of the Al-Islah society. Signed a 2011 petition for democratic reform. Arrested 2012, sentenced in the UAE94 mass trial, re-sentenced to life imprisonment in 2024 after completing his first sentence.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Release Sheikh Mohammed Al-Siddiq immediately and unconditionally;
2. Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights;
3. Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention;
4. Provide Sheikh Mohammed Al-Siddiq with immediate, independent medical evaluation and the full treatment that condition requires, including transfer to an independent civilian hospital if necessary;
5. Immediately end all harassment, summons, surveillance, and threats against the family of Sheikh Mohammed Al-Siddiq in United Arab Emirates.

I will continue to monitor this case until Sheikh Mohammed Al-Siddiq is free.

Respectfully,

[Your name]
[Your city, country]
8 November 2026