One year since the arrest of Abdulrahman Yusuf al-Qaradawi: a year of complicity, enforced disappearance, and diplomatic failure

Joint Statements · Egypt · Lebanon · United Arab Emirates · 28 December 2025

Today, **28 December 2025**, marks one year since the arrest of Egyptian–Turkish poet and opposition figure **Abdulrahman Yusuf al-Qaradawi** in Lebanon. This incident constitutes a serious violation of Lebanese law and of Lebanon's international obligations and reveals a dangerous pattern of transnational repression, in which political complicity enables the transfer of dissidents to states where they face serious risks to their lives and freedoms.

On **28 December 2024**, Lebanese authorities arrested Abdulrahman Yusuf al-Qaradawi pursuant to an extradition request issued by the Emirati authorities, solely in connection with his exercise of the right to freedom of expression. Despite the absence of any meaningful legal safeguards, and notwithstanding clear warnings about the serious risks he would face if deported, the Lebanese Council of Ministers took an urgent decision on 8 January 2025 to forcibly extradite him to the United Arab Emirates. This decision amounted to a blatant violation of the principle of non-refoulement.On the same day, Mr. Al-Qaradawi's lawyer appealed the decision in front of the State Council, Lebanon's highest administrative court. Later, on 23 October 2025, his lawyer was notified of the State Council's decision No. 43/2025-2026 (PDF), rejecting the appeal submitted by Al-Qaradawi challenging the decree ordering his extradition to the United Arab Emirates.

In an Urgent Appeal sent earlier to the Government of Lebanon on 6 January 2025, UN Special Procedures mandate holders raised concerns about the risk of torture or ill-treatment, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, and violations of fair trial and due process guarantees to which Al-Qaradawi could be exposed if extradited to Egypt or the UAE.

Since the moment of his extradition , all contact between al-Qaradawi and his family and lawyers has been completely cut off, with the sole exception of two abrupt family visits allowed in March and August 2025, each lasting no more than ten minutes, held in an undisclosed location. The Emirati authorities have provided no information regarding his place of detention, legal status, or the nature of any proceedings against him, amounting to an ongoing case of enforced disappearance. His family has reported that he is being held in harsh conditions, including prolonged solitary confinement, deprivation of outdoor exercise and communication, severe restrictions on visits, and denial of access to his personal belongings, books, and photographs of his children. These conditions have led to a serious deterioration in his psychological well-being and a grave denial of his fundamental rights.

The undersigned organizations stress that responsibility for these violations does not lie with the

Emirati authorities alone, but extends directly to the Lebanese authorities, who disregarded their international obligations by deporting Abdulrahman despite the knowledge that he would face serious and foreseeable risks of torture and ill-treatment.. Abdulrahman Yusuf al-Qaradawi is an Egyptian national and holds Turkish citizenship. The organizations warned that extrading him to a third country (UAE) constitutes a dangerous precedent, which poses a direct threat to the safety of dissidents and human rights defenders in exile.

The undersigned organizations also express concern regarding the limited public role played so far by the Turkish authorities in following up on the situation of Abdulrahman Yusuf al-Qaradawi, despite his status as a Turkish citizen. In this context, the organizations underscore the importance of states fulfilling their responsibility to protect their nationals detained abroad, including by seeking clear information about their place of detention and legal status, requesting regular consular visits, and ensuring their physical and psychological well-being, particularly in cases that raise serious concerns related to prolonged solitary confinement or complete isolation from the outside world.

Accordingly, the undersigned organizations call for the following:

First: To the Emirati authorities

- Immediately disclose the whereabouts of Abdulrahman Yusuf al-Qaradawi and his legal status.
- End his arbitrary detention and release him immediately, and unconditionally so long as no evidence of a recognized offense has been presented,
- Put an end to prolonged solitary confinement, ensure humane conditions of detention, and allow regular communication with his family and lawyers.
- Open an independent investigation into all violations he has been subjected to and ensure accountability for those responsible.

Second: To the Lebanese authorities

- Open an independent and transparent investigation into the circumstances of his arrest and extradition decision, and hold accountable those responsible for violating the principle of non-refoulement.
- Review extradition and deportation policies to ensure full compliance with Lebanon’s international obligations.
- Refrain from relying on non-binding or unverifiable “diplomatic assurances” in extradition cases, given their failure to guarantee human rights protections.

Third: To the Turkish authorities

- Intensify efforts to follow up on the situation of Abdulrahman Yusuf al-Qaradawi as a Turkish citizen, and take appropriate diplomatic and consular steps to uphold his rights and seek his

release.

- Seek to ensure regular and unrestricted consular visits, and obtain reliable information regarding his place of detention and legal status.
- Closely monitor his physical and psychological health, in light of alarming indicators concerning his conditions of detention.
- Utilize all available diplomatic and legal channels to help protect his fundamental rights, in line with Turkey's international obligations, including under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

Signatory Organizations:

1. Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
2. Law and Democracy Support Foundation (LDSF)
3. El Nadeem
4. Egyptian Front for Human Rights
5. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
6. Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR)
7. CIVICUS
8. Their Rights
9. MENA Rights Group
10. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
11. REDWORD for Human Rights & Freedom of Expression
12. Cedar Centre for Legal Studies
13. EgyptWide for Human Rights
14. Najda For Human Rights
15. Egyptian Commission for rights and freedoms (ECRF)
16. Dafater Masr
17. Arab foundation for civil society and human rights support

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