

Gulf Centre for Human Rights

On behalf of the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), French human rights lawyer **William Bourdon** [lodged an official complaint](#) with the Prosecutor's Office in Paris on 07 June 2021 against Emirati Major General Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi in the case of the unlawful arrest and subsequent torture of GCHR's Board member **Ahmed Mansoor**. The complaint is based on the concept of universal jurisdiction and seeks to bring Al-Raisi to justice while he is in France seeking the presidency of Interpol this year.

“The inhumane conditions in which Ahmed Mansoor is being held are constitutive of torture. These acts must be recognised by a Tribunal and by the international community, and the responsible parties must be held accountable. To that end, pursuits by a French prosecutor are the only viable resort based on two facts: there is nothing to expect from the Emirati justice system and it is very probable that Major General Al-Raisi will soon be coming on French soil to campaign for the presidency of Interpol, thus enabling pursuits in France based on universal jurisdiction,” said Bourdon.

Mansoor, the United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s most prominent human rights defender, is serving a ten-year sentence for his human rights activities. In January 2021, Human Rights Watch and GCHR [detailed](#) the government's persecution of Mansoor, including indefinite solitary confinement and abhorrent detention conditions since his arrest in March 2017. He is held in a small cell with no mattress or bed, nor access to reading materials. According to the *United Nations* Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (*Nelson Mandela Rules*), prolonged solitary confinement constitutes torture.

GCHR's complaint lodged in France concludes that “Mansoor suffered severe pain and suffering as a result of both his prolonged isolation and the material conditions of his detention and the limitation or absence of contact with his relatives.”

On 05 May 2021, GCHR and Human Rights Watch [issued a joint appeal](#) saying Al-Raisi's candidacy for president of Interpol may jeopardise the global police organisation's commitment to its [human rights obligations](#). Interpol will name its new president at its General Assembly in Lyon on 23-25 November 2021.

In October 2020, GCHR also [joined](#) over a dozen other international human rights and civil society groups expressing concern over Al-Raisi's potential election to the Interpol presidency.

Al-Raisi has held the high-level position of inspector general at the UAE Interior Ministry since April 2015, making him responsible, among other things, for investigating complaints against police and security forces. The UAE state security apparatus has a long record of multiple abuses.

As there is no recourse to justice for torture in the Gulf region, GCHR will continue to pursue cases to end impunity by using universal jurisdiction in European countries. In May 2021, Bourdon also [lodged an official complaint](#) in Paris against Saudi Major General Ahmed Hassan Mohammad Al-Asiri for his role in the torture and murder of journalist **Jamal Khashoggi**.