

APPENDIX: Additional Information on UAE Human Rights Violations and Climate Concerns

1. Demand that the UAE not spy on COP28 attendees and end unlawful state surveillance that violates international human rights law and standards.

The UAE is a surveillance state that uses its technology to spy on millions of people both inside and outside its borders. We urge you to publicly call on the UAE to:

- cease all planned surveillance of COP28 attendees,
- refrain from censoring communication networks,
- allow the free use and full functionality of all encrypted messenger apps, and
- stop using surveillance technology to spy on and repress peaceful critics inside the UAE and worldwide.

As [documented](#) by Amnesty International and [Citizen Lab](#), the UAE has a long record of [spying on human rights defenders](#), including imprisoned human rights advocate [Ahmed Mansoor](#). Two separate Reuters [news reports](#) document how the UAE, with the support of hired U.S. intelligence operatives, spied on journalists, activists, and political leaders worldwide, including Yemeni Nobel Peace laureate Tawokkol Karman.

In 2019, the New York Times [reported](#) that ToTok, a cell phone messaging app downloaded globally by millions, was actually a UAE mass surveillance tool, and Google and Apple [removed](#) the popular app from their online stores. Evidence also suggests that the UAE is also likely to have been [behind the digital surveillance of other public figures](#), including government officials, human rights defenders, and journalists and editors. The UAE was also [likely to be one of the customers](#) of NSO Group, the Israeli producer of Pegasus hacking-and-surveillance software.

2. Call on the UAE to release all prisoners of conscience.

UAE authorities have unjustly imprisoned numerous Emirati human rights defenders, civil society activists, and political dissidents. We urge you to publicly call on the UAE to:

- release all prisoners of conscience,
- stop harassing their families,
- close all secret prisons, and
- stop torturing detainees and holding them in solitary confinement..

For over a decade, UAE authorities have [unjustly detained](#) over 60 Emirati human rights defenders, civil society activists, and political dissidents who were arrested due to their demands for reform and democracy. Many from this group, commonly known as the “UAE94”, were subjected to enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment. As documented by

the [SANID human rights campaign](#), more than three-quarters of these prisoners remain in prison, despite 55 of them having completed their unjust sentences. Families of the imprisoned have been subjected to [unrelenting reprisals](#). In 2021, these [human rights concerns](#) led the European Parliament to [vote to “encourage Member States not to participate”](#) in the UAE Dubai World Expo, a decision that [received international attention](#).

3. Demand action on UAE violations of women’s rights:

The UAE has an extensive record of violating women’s rights, including discriminatory laws and even personal acts of violence against women by senior ruling elites. We urge you to take the following steps to push for an end to the UAE’s terrible record on women’s rights:

- Pledge not to meet with or join events with senior UAE officials who have committed, or are accused of committing, violence against women. These individuals include Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum ([kidnapping of his adult daughters](#) and [spousal abuse](#)) and UAE Minister of “Tolerance” Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan ([accused of rape](#)).
- Call for an independent investigation and prosecution of Dubai ruler Sheikh Maktoum and UAE Minister of “Tolerance” Sheikh Nahyan for their documented and alleged acts of violence against women.
- Call for freedom for Dubai Princess Shamsa, who has not been seen publicly since she was kidnapped in 2000 by her father, Dubai ruler Sheikh Al Maktoum.
- Call for repeal of the UAE’s [male guardianship laws and other laws](#) that discriminate against women.

The government enforces a system of discrimination and male control over Emirati women. UAE law also discriminates based on gender in the transmission of citizenship from parent to child. All children born to an Emirati father become Emirati nationals from the moment of birth, while children born to an Emirati mother but a non-Emirati father can only be granted Emirati nationality by special permission from the government, and can only be applied for at least six years after birth.

4. Condemn UAE violations of LGBTQI+ rights

The UAE [criminalises](#) and discriminates against LGBTQI+ individuals, including laws that infringe on the right of consenting adults to freely decide their own sexual practices. We urge you to call for the upholding of the [human rights of LGBTQI+ people](#) in the UAE and to demand that the UAE end its discrimination against, and criminalisation and [oppression](#) of, LGBTQI+ individuals

- Call for the repeal of all UAE laws that criminalise LGBTQI+ individuals, whether the criminalization is through explicit provisions or through the impact of vague, overly broad and legally undefined terms.
- Call for the prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression in the UAE
- Demand the safeguarding of freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly for LGBTQI+ communities.

5. Call for workers' rights reforms and reparations for forced labor.

We urge you to call on the UAE monarchy to:

- Pay reparations to all migrant workers who built or have worked at the site of the COP28 facilities under conditions of abuse and forced labor.
- Commit to protecting migrant workers from [exposure to extreme heat](#), which can lead to potentially fatal injuries and illnesses.
- Lift the ban on independent labor unions and allow all workers in the UAE to organize and advocate for their needs.
- Abolish the Kafala system of labor sponsorship, which traps many migrant and foreign workers in systems of human trafficking, forced labor, and other abuses.
- End all sex trafficking and conditions of sexual slavery in Dubai.

Approximately 90 percent of the UAE's 9 million population are foreign nationals — most of whom are low-wage and semi-skilled workers from Africa, Asia, and elsewhere in the Middle East. Even the U.S. government, a [major ally and enabler](#) of UAE human rights violations, stated in its [2023 US Trafficking in Persons report on the UAE](#) that "it is not uncommon for employers to subject some of these workers to conditions indicative of forced labor, such as passport retention, non-payment of wages and unpaid overtime, restrictions on movement, contract switching, fraudulent employment promises, substandard food and housing provisions, or a failure to meet other contractual agreements." And as [reported by Reuters](#) earlier this year, sex trafficking persists in the UAE without serious efforts by Emirati authorities to end it."

The very site where COP28 will be held was built and has been staffed by workers who were abused and subjected to forced labor. The COP28 climate negotiations will occur in [Expo City Dubai](#), a site that was originally built for the UAE Dubai Expo 2020. As [documented by labor rights organization Equidem](#) during the time of Expo 2020, "migrant workers engaged on projects at Expo 2020 Dubai across a range of sectors — from hospitality and retail to construction and security — are being subjected to forced labour practices." More than 40,000 workers were employed in the Expo City Dubai construction process, and thousands of additional migrant workers have performed other forms of work. The "majority of Expo 2020 Dubai workers interviewed faced forced labour practices." Without proper investigation and reparations for these workers, COP28 climate negotiations will occur on the backs of abused workers.

6. Urge the UAE to stop supporting human rights violators in Yemen and across the Middle East and North Africa.

We urge you to demand that the UAE:

- Stop intervening across the Middle East and North Africa to suppress exercise of human rights and stop supporting crackdowns on opposition political groups, including in [Bahrain](#), [Egypt](#), and [Tunisia](#).
- Stop [supporting human rights violations by states or armed groups in Yemen](#) that have imprisoned, tortured, and killed civilians.
- Pay full reparations to people [harmed by the Saudi/UAE-led war](#) and blockade on Yemen.
- Stop violating the UN Security Council's comprehensive arms embargo in Libya and [stop supplying arms to armed forces in Libya](#).

7. Publicly repudiate UAE greenwashing and fossil fuel hypocrisy:

We urge you to publicly reject the UAE's [massive campaign](#) of greenwashing, propaganda, and fossil fuel hypocrisy.

Specifically, we urge you to commit to the following actions:

- Demand that the UAE abandon plans to dramatically increase state oil and gas production.
- Oppose Sultan al-Jaber serving simultaneously as COP28 president and [CEO of UAE state oil company ADNOC](#).
- Call for adoption of a COP28 global commitment to the rapid, equitable, and full phase out of all fossil fuels and all fossil fuel subsidies at the speed necessary to keep global average temperature increases below 1.5C.

As host of COP28, the UAE has repeatedly issued climate-friendly statements while simultaneously pursuing a [dramatic expansion](#) of its [oil and gas production](#). Ninety percent of the UAE's government revenue comes from its fossil fuel industries, and the UAE monarchy [uses this vast fossil fuel wealth](#) to fund internal repression and regional interventions that violate human rights. Furthermore, the UAE [has appointed](#) the very individual in charge of its fossil fuel expansion — ADNOC chief executive Sultan al-Jaber — to preside over the COP28 climate negotiations. In early 2023, [Climate Action Network](#) and [Amnesty International](#) called for al-Jaber to step down as CEO of the UAE's state oil company. Over [450 climate organizations](#) have declared that "No COP overseen by a fossil fuel executive can be seen as legitimate." And in May of 2023, over 130 Members of the European Parliament and U.S. Members of Congress [called for al-Jaber's removal](#) as COP28 president.