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<http://www.rsf.org/united-arab-emirates-prison-sentence-for-netizen-22-05-2013,44655.html>

Middle East/North Africa - United Arab Emirates

Growing concerns

Prison sentence for netizen

22 May 2013

[Read in Arabic \(بالعربية\)](#)

Reporters Without Borders expresses outrage at the Abu Dhabi appeals court confirmation of the 10-month prison sentence of netizen **Abdullah Al-Hadidi**.

The appeals court made its ruling on 22 May.

Arrested on 22 March, Al-Hadidi was convicted in a lower court in April of [having disseminated information on Twitter "in bad faith"](#). The information concerned the trial of 94 UAE citizens accused of endangering national security.

Al-Hadidi was charged under a new cyber-crime law adopted in late 2012 (Federal Legal Decree 5/2012). The law has aroused strong opposition on the grounds that it can be used to justify severe limits on freedom of expression and information in the UAE.

Reporters Without Borders has also learned of the 11 May arrest of another netizen, **Waleed Al-Shehhi**. He was in secret detention before his transfer one week later to Al-Wathaba prison.

This human rights defender is being charged under article 28 of the cyber-crime law for having disseminated on his Twitter account information on the trial of 94 UAE citizens, known as the "UAE94." Article 28 provides for imprisonment and a fine of up to 1 million dirhams (212,000 euros), for anyone who uses information technology "with the intent of inciting to actions, or publishing or disseminating any information, news, caricatures or other images liable to endanger security and its higher interests or infringe on the public order."

Violations are defined as a crimes against the state, with no appeal allowed.

Reporters Without Borders calls attention to the fact that this netizen did nothing more than use social networks to provide relevant public information. The organization calls for him to be freed immediately and for the charges against him be dropped.

[Foreign media and observers have been barred](#) from the 13 trial sessions for the UAE94, and only handpicked representatives of the national media have been allowed into the courtroom. The verdict is expected on 2 July.

You can download those documents on our website :

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