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<http://www.rsf.org/united-arab-emirates-blogger-to-appear-in-court-next-13-07-2011,40636.html>

Middle East & North Africa - United Arab Emirates

Free him

Blogger to appear in court next week

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The trial of **Ahmed Mansoor**, a blogger and human rights activist who has been held since April, is due to resume in Abu Dhabi on 18 July. Reporters Without Borders urges the authorities to drop the charges against this netizen and release him without delay.

More than 10 police officers took part in Mansoor's arrest in April, seizing two laptops and several documents. His arrest, after signing a petition calling for democratic reforms in the United Arab Emirates, followed several weeks during which he was the target of intimidation attempts and a smear campaign, especially on the social networks Facebook and Twitter.

Mansoor was also pressured by his employer, a telecommunications company that suddenly decided to relocate to Pakistan in a move which, according to Mansoor's [blog](#), was motivated by political interests.

Four other pro-democracy activists are being tried with Mansoor. They are **Farhad Salem, Nasser bin Ghaith, Hassan Ali Al-Khamis** and **Ahmed Abdul Khaleq**. They are all charged with threatening state security, undermining public order and insulting the president, the vice president and the crown prince of Abu Dhabi.

They pleaded not-guilty when the first hearing was held on 14 June, just hours after the judge scheduled to preside the case was replaced. During the hearing, a pro-government demonstration took place outside, with members of the crowd chanting death threats against the defendants.

The trial would be adjourned again at next week's hearing as the prosecution wants to bring new "witnesses" whose identity has not yet been revealed to the defence. Reporters Without Borders has learned that Mansoor is meanwhile suffering from a severe allergy but has been denied access to a dermatologist, despite repeated requests.

He seems to be the collateral victim of the increase in security measures and repression that Arab governments have adopted up in recent months because of the spread of protests. More arrests are taking place, online filtering and surveillance of Internet users have been stepped up and the authorities are still trying to get access to the BlackBerry smartphone's encrypted communications – all disturbing signs in this troubled region.

The United Arab Emirates is listed as a "country under surveillance" in the "[Enemies of the Internet](#)" report that Reporters Without Borders released on 12 March.
