



Brussels, 19 November 2021

Subject: Concern over the candidacy of General Major Ahmed Nasser Al Raisi to the presidency of INTERPOL

Dear High Representative/Vice President Josep Borrell,

We, the undersigned Members of the European Parliament, are writing to express our deepest concerns over the [candidacy](#) of Emirati General Major Ahmed Nasser Al Raisi to the presidency of the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL).

As you may already be aware, at the end of this month, elections will be held for the presidency of the INTERPOL. The [president](#), who is elected for a mandate of four years, presides over the meetings and directs the discussions. The future holder of this crucial position should thus be carefully selected.

General Al Raisi is the current Inspector General of the Ministry of Interior in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and his tasks include, among others, the management and oversight of the Emirati police force. These troops are the very same that are responsible for the [arbitrary arrests](#) of peaceful dissidents, often using violence and without providing the necessary warrants. The UAE police has also been denounced multiple times for practicing [torture](#) as a mean to extract false confessions, that are later used in unlawful trials. Ahmed Nasser Al Raisi is part of a regime that prevents [freedom of expression](#), that has committed numerous human rights violations that could amount to war crimes and even [crimes against humanity](#) in Yemen, and that closes its eyes on human trafficking and the horrendous living conditions of the migrant workers; among other numerous violations.

This candidacy comes in a context of increasing control of the UAE on INTERPOL. A recent [report](#) by the former UK Director of Public Prosecution revealed that INTERPOL's most important source of non-governmental funding comes from an organization called the "Interpol Foundation for a Safer world", that is actually a cover-up for the Emirati government money being injected into INTERPOL. The disproportionate influence of one single country on the organization's budget is not only worrying, but it also gives the impression that the nomination of General Major Ahmed Nasser Al Raisi as president of INTERPOL could be a reward to the UAE's generous contributions.

The possibility for the UAE to misuse INTERPOL tools to target its own dissidents is already a [reality](#). Many authoritarian countries [use](#) the red notices, international arrest warrants issued by Interpol, to target their own dissidents. In the UAE, freedom of expression is so limited that it is virtually impossible to call for democracy or criticize the government without being arrested. For this reason, many activists or human rights defenders are forced to flee the country and leave in exile to continue to denounce the human rights violations committed by the regime. Nominating Al Raisi at the head of INTERPOL would

amount to putting the lives of exiled activists even more in danger, and by silencing them, create even more impunity for the violations committed by the Emirati regime.

If Al Raisi were to become the president of INTERPOL, it would completely undermine the organization's credibility on fighting both cybercrime and terrorism. On the one hand, the UAE's government has been known to use [spying softwares](#) to perform a mass scaled surveillance on activists and dissidents, including Ahmed Mansoor, who has been held in prolonged solitary confinement since 2017. The latest discovery concerns the Pegasus software, which was used by the UAE to spy on [journalists](#). On the other hand, the UAE consistently uses a vague counter-terrorism legal framework to target innocent activists and dissidents. In an [analysis](#) released in late 2020, several UN Special Rapporteurs denounced the fact that the terrorism framework could be used to limit freedom of expression and that it could be used to punish "those who express legitimate criticism of the Government's policies or actions".

In its [resolution](#) of the 16 September 2021, the European Parliament called on the Member States of the European Union (EU) "to duly examine the allegations of human rights abuses concerning General Major Nasser Ahmed al-Raisi ahead of the election of the presidency of the organisation from 23 to 25 November 2021, as well as noting "the concerns expressed by civil society regarding his candidacy and the potential impact on the reputation of the institution".

We consider it is the responsibility of the EU to ensure the respect of the rule of law and of human rights across the globe, a mission that would be extremely difficult would General Major Nasser Ahmed Al Raisi be nominated as president of INTERPOL.

Therefore we urge you to publicly raise concerns over General Al Raisi's candidacy in light of the accusations of torture against him as well as the UAE's human rights records, and to encourage EU Member States not to support his candidacy. We also call on you to prompt the UAE authorities to remove General Al Raisi from his position of Inspector General and to open investigations on his allegations of torture, while reiterating the call to immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed Mansoor and other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.

In light of these actions, we would like to remind you that the poor human rights records in the UAE and its authorities' attempts to gloss over rights abuses are met with great concern by the European Parliament and the international community at large. We, therefore, urge you to hold the UAE government to account for its continued human rights violations.

Looking forward to your prompt response,

MEP Ernest Urtasun (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Saskia Bricmont (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Nikolaj Villumsen (The Left)  
MEP Brando Benifei (S&D)  
MEP Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA)  
MEP Rosa D'Amato (Greens/EFA)

MEP Margrete Auken (Greens/EFA)  
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MEP Terry Reintke (Greens/EFA)  
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MEP Claude Gruffat (Greens/EFA)  
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MEP Stelios Kouloglou (The Left)  
MEP Maria Arena (S&D)  
MEP Javier Nart (Renew)  
MEP Eva Kaili (S&D)  
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MEP Alice Kuhnke (Greens/EFA)  
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MEP Francisco Guerreiro (Greens/EFA)  
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MEP Michal Šimečka (Renew)  
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