



Houses of Parliament

22 November, 2021

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
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Pmpost.ext@no10.gov.uk

By email

Dear Prime Minister,

We, the undersigned Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum, are writing to you to express our deep concerns regarding the candidacy of Major General Ahmed Naser al-Raisi, the Inspector General of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Ministry of Interior, for the Presidency of Interpol, to be elected between 23rd and 25th November 2021. We believe that al-Raisi's appointment would severely damage Interpol's reputation, given the UAE's poor human rights record and Major General al-Raisi's own role, and we call on the UK government to oppose his candidacy.

As a UAE Government official, Major General al-Raisi is part of a state apparatus that [systematically](#) carries out grave human rights abuses, including the detention of human rights defenders and peaceful critics and the use of torture and ill-treatment in security facilities. Prominent cases include Emirati human rights activist [Ahmed Mansoor](#), who is detained in solitary confinement and facing a ten-year prison sentence for his activism. British citizens have also been targeted, including academic [Matthew Hedges](#), who was detained for seven months, denied his basic rights to due process and tortured. Hedges was among more than 400 people in the UK whose mobile phone numbers were [reportedly](#) targeted by NSO Group's client governments, including the UAE.

In addition, as the Inspector General of the UAE's Ministry of Interior since 2015, Major General al-Raisi is directly responsible for the organisation and management of the security and police forces in the country and the investigation of complaints submitted against them.

His appointment would stand in stark contradiction to the spirit of Interpol's mission to uphold the law and therefore severely damage the organisation's reputation.

Also of concern is that the UAE has been called out in a recent [report](#) written by the UK's former director of public prosecutions, Sir David Calvert-Smith, for attempting to abuse Interpol's Red Notice system, including by using it against those seen as a threat to the regime. Such misuse threatens Interpol's core mission to fight international crime, and contravenes its constitution which [prohibits](#) the undertaking of "any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character".

Furthermore, the UAE has been accused of attempts to improperly influence Interpol through funding. Calvert-Smith's [report](#) documents the UAE's substantial financial contributions to Interpol, including a €50m donation in 2017, finding "coherent evidence that the UAE is seeking to improperly influence Interpol through funding and other mechanisms".

Major General al-Raisi's candidacy has unsurprisingly drawn significant international criticism, and there are several ongoing legal complaints against him, including from Mr Hedges. Calvert-Smith's report deems the candidacy of Mr al-Raisi to be "unsuitable" given the UAE's record, and that its success would "send a message to the world that Interpol has little or no respect for human rights".

Finally, we are concerned about [reports](#) that a UK-based PR firm has been used to promote Mr al-Raisi's candidacy, and may have been seeking to involve former UK Ministers in their campaign.

The UK has an influential voice within Interpol, and the institution plays an important role in the UK's efforts to combat international crime. The Interpol Presidency is therefore of fundamental significance to our own security interests. As such, and in light of the concerns outlined in this letter, we call on you, your Ministers and officials to oppose Major General al-Raisi's candidacy, and support a candidate from another country where fundamental rights and freedoms are enshrined and respected.

In the longer-term, we also call on the UK Government to support a more open, transparent, and timely process for nominations to all elected Interpol positions, so candidates for these positions can be properly vetted and considered.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Ferrier MP - Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Rights (PHRG)

Baroness Stern - Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Human Rights (PHRG)

Sir Peter Bottomley MP

Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP

Tony Lloyd MP

Kenny MacAskill MP