

# Topic #2 – UAE is Keen on Tackling Human Rights Issues Head On

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*Speech by H.E. Dr Anwar Mohammed Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.*

In a statement delivered before the third UPR Working Group reviewing UAE's fulfillment of human rights obligations, Gargash said that this aspiration stems "from our own cultural heritage and religious values which enshrine justice, equality and tolerance.

The government is aware of the significance of its human rights record and is investing its energies to modernize laws and practices." The government is also aware that respecting human rights in accordance with international human charters and customs is a priority, and we look towards meeting this priority at all levels. In addition, the UAE has already ratified a number of international conventions, which are listed in the National Report." Following is the full text of the statement made by Dr. Anwar Mohammad Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign: Affairs Good morning Mr. President, Honorable High Commissioner, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, My delegation and I are honored to present the national report of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at this session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and take this opportunity to relay to you the warm greetings of the UAE government.

The UAE welcomes the UPR process as a promising United Nations General Assembly mechanism to constructively review every country's performance in comprehensively protecting, promoting and fulfilling the main principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The UAE's process of compiling the UPR report was a combined effort, conducted by a specifically formed committee that represented government authorities, both federal and local, and civil society organizations, including human rights and journalists associations. A draft was developed and sent to government ministries, civil associations, various individuals with a record of public service as well as our National Assembly - the Federal National Council - for feedback. Workshops and meetings were conducted to discuss and debate pertinent issues and opinions were sought from diverse entities, before preparation of the final version. Several members who were involved in the compilation of the report are part of the delegation here today.

Further details on the consultation process at both the federal and local levels that were an essential component to drafting the UAE's statement is outlined in the National Report that was submitted to the Human Rights Council.

At the outset, let me state that amid a rapid modernization process, the UAE - a federation of seven emirates -- has had a challenging, but progressive track record on human rights issues. We have had our ups and downs in this process and how our efforts have been appraised. But our commitment is resolute and we intend to do better by sharing our experiences and learning from the best practices of the international community.

With a deep aspiration to improve, the UAE is keen on tackling human rights issues head on. This aspiration stems from our own cultural heritage and religious values which enshrine justice, equality and tolerance. The government is aware of the significance of its human rights record and is investing its energies to modernize laws and practices. The government is also aware that respecting human rights in accordance with international human charters and customs is a priority, and we look towards meeting this priority at all levels. In addition, the UAE has already ratified a number of international conventions, which are listed in the National Report.

The UAE respects the integrity of every individual that resides in the country. Its commitment to guarantee equality and social justice for all citizens is ingrained in the Constitution. Our Constitution also outlines the freedoms and rights of all citizens, prohibits torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, respects civil liberties, including freedom of speech and press, peaceful assembly and association, as well as religion.

Moving forward, the UAE is committed to studying the framework for accession to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The UAE has amply demonstrated its commitment to these principles through the enactment of several laws that have been effectively implemented, details of which are in the report.

The UAE's open-minded approach has ensured a healthy amalgam of its own traditions and values, as well as those of the rest of the world. The net result is the existence of a balance between our Islamic traditions and heritage and the practices of other countries.[...]

"UAE Is Keen on Tackling Human Rights Issues Head On: Gargash." UAE. *UAE Interact*, 12 May 2008. Web. 21 May 2015.

[http://www.uaeinteract.com/docs/UAE is keen on tackling human rights issues head on Gargash/33221.htm](http://www.uaeinteract.com/docs/UAE%20is%20keen%20on%20tackling%20human%20rights%20issues%20head%20on%20Gargash/33221.htm)

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