



12 December 2018

Sheikh Salman Bin Ibrahim Al-Khalifa  
AFC House  
Jalan 1/155B, Bukit Jalil  
57000 Kuala Lumpur  
Malaysia

Dear Sheikh Salman Al Khalifa,

We note the response of the Asian Football Confederation to our letter of 6 December 2018 concerning Hakeem Ali Mohamed Ali AlAraibi, a football player with refugee status in Australia who is from Bahrain. However, we must express our great disappointment that the response does not outline the steps that you or the organization will take to ensure that Mr. AlAraibi is not extradited from Thailand to Bahrain, where he faces certain torture and where he fears for his life. In his own words, Mr. AlAraibi has [expressed deep fear](#) that “if I go to Bahrain, I will be tortured again.” As the President of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and a Vice President of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), you have significant influence. We call upon you to use that position and influence to ensure that Mr. AlAraibi is not extradited from Thailand to Bahrain and that he is allowed to immediately return to Australia without any hindrance.

The developments in Mr. AlAraibi’s case in Thailand are proceeding apace, and we regret that as of today, the Thai court has extended Mr. AlAraibi’s detention for 60 days, paving the way for Thailand to extradite him pending a court order. It has also recently [come to light](#) that the judge who sentenced Mr. AlAraibi in a deeply flawed trial that relied solely on the tortured confession of his brother, Emad AlAraibi, is Sheikh Mohamed bin Ali Al Khalifa, a member of the Bahraini royal family. Because of this, there is an even more urgent need for you, as a member of the Bahraini royal family and President of the AFC - which has jurisdiction over the Bahrain Football Association (BFA) - to publicly stand up for your player. FIFA and the Football Federation Australia (FFA) have already called for his release and we strongly urge you to echo these calls.

We see the paucity of the response to our initial letter as an indication that you will remain silent, despite the fact that your letter explicitly references FIFA, which has already called for Mr. AlAraibi’s release. Indeed, a FIFA spokesperson [stated](#) “FIFA supports the calls for the Thai authorities to allow Mr. al-Araibi to return to Australia where he currently enjoys refugee status at the earliest possible moment.” Furthermore, FIFA stated that it [expects](#) Mr. AlAraibi’s case “to be solved in accordance with well-established international standards.”

As part of its [mission](#), the AFC states that it is “Focused and dedicated to maximize the potential of [Member Associations]” and it seeks to “Ensure that the AFC’s competitions, matches, and the conduct of its people conform to the highest ethical and sporting standards.” Given this, we are surprised and disappointed at your refusal to issue a statement supporting Mr. AlAraibi’s right to return to Australia. As the President of the AFC, you have a responsibility to support your players and Member Associations. To stay silent while a player in the AFC faces extradition and almost-certain torture would mean a complete abdication of your responsibility as head of the AFC and would flout the “highest ethical” standards your Confederation aspires to.

We call upon you to take a firmer stance on Mr. AlAraibi's case and immediately and publicly advocate for his release from detention and for Thai authorities to grant him permission to travel unhindered back to Australia. FIFA has already taken a public stance, as has the FFA, an association beneath the umbrella of the AFC. Because of this, as a Vice President of FIFA and the President of the AFC, we strongly urge you support the statements by FIFA and the FFA. We also strongly urge you to leverage all of your influence as a member of the Bahraini royal family to ensure that Hakeem AlAraibi is not extradited to Bahrain, where he is risk of torture. If you fail to take such steps, we will view this as giving a greenlight for Mr. AlAraibi to be sent back to Bahrain. You have the influence and power to ensure that Mr. AlAraibi is able to return home to Australia. We urge you to exercise your influence to allow him to leave Thailand and not be extradited to Bahrain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Husain Abdulla', written over a horizontal line.

Husain Abdulla  
Executive Director  
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain