

28 January 2019

The Honourable Don Pramudwinai  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
443 Sri Ayudhya Rd.  
Bangkok 10400

The Honourable Don Pramudwinai,

We write to you today to express our grave concern for the ongoing detention of Bahraini footballer Hakeem AlAraibi. On 27 November 2018, AlAraibi travelled to Thailand and was detained at an airport in Bangkok, pending deportation to Bahrain due to an INTERPOL Red Notice placed against him at the request of Bahrain. On 4 December, INTERPOL lifted the Red Notice, but Thailand has continued to keep AlAraibi in custody as Thai authorities process Bahrain's extradition request. As of 12 December 2018, however, a Thai court extended Hakeem AlAraibi's detention for 60 days at the Bangkok Remand Prison, raising the risk that Thailand will extradite AlAraibi to Bahrain.

Since Hakeem AlAraibi's detention in Thailand, the international community has repeatedly called for AlAraibi's release and safe return to Australia. Australia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, [Marise Payne](#), has raised AlAraibi's case in meetings with Thai government officials, and repeatedly called for his release since he was first detained. Human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, have also condemned AlAraibi's continued detention and backed the Australian Foreign Minister's calls urging for his safe return to Australia. We would like also to remind you of the legally binding principle of "non-refoulement," where states are prohibited from returning an individual to a country where they are at risk of torture or other serious human rights violations. Race Discrimination Commissioner Chin Tan of the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has similarly called for AlAraibi's release from detention, requesting "Thai authorities give full consideration to the human rights implications of Mr. Al-Araibi's ongoing detention and any further action to be taken to return Mr. Al-Araibi to Bahrain." The Governments of the United States, Sweden, and Germany [have all urged](#) Thailand to release him, while sporting authorities, including international sporting organizations such as the [Fédération Internationale de Football Association](#) (FIFA), have also joined the call for AlAraibi's release.

Calls for his release have been likewise echoed by the [Football Federation Australia](#), which has published statements by athletes who have joined in the calls for AlAraibi's release, including former Socceroo captain and Australian football analyst [Craig Foster](#) and the CEO of the Professional Footballers Association in Australia, [John Didulica](#). Moreover, Washington DC-based Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain and the London-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy have jointly [submitted](#) an Urgent Appeal concerning AlAraibi's case to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, raising serious concerns about the risk of torture AlAraibi faces should Thailand extradite him to Bahrain, stating that such an action "would be in violation of Thailand's international legal obligations." Amnesty International has echoed such sentiments, [finding](#) that his extradition would violate international law.

Given the calls for his freedom, and the importance that we are convinced your country gives to the rights of refugees and its respect for international human rights norms and standards, we respectfully urge the Thai authorities to release Hakeem AlAraibi from detention and ensure his safe return to Australia, where he maintains refugee status.

Sincerely,

Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL)  
Brando Benifei (S&D)  
Lynn Boylan (GUE/NGL)  
Matt Carthy (GUE/NGL)  
Ignazio Corrao (EFDD)  
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