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Minister of Justice
Faisal Saeed Al-Ghareeb
Council of Ministers General Secretariat
Al-Safat 13014
P.O. Box 1397
Kuwait

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Your Excellency,

**I am alarmed by the news that on 31 January 2024, an Appeals Court convicted Mohammad al-Barghash, 52, the Head of the National Bloc of Kuwaiti Bidun, solely for speaking out about the plight of the stateless Bidun community in Kuwait including the arrest of another Bidun activist during an interview he gave on 12 August 2023 to Nabaa TV, a Saudi opposition channel broadcasting from Lebanon**. The court sentenced him to three years imprisonment and ordered him to turn himself in.

On 3 September 2023 in the evening, plain clothed officers from the State Security Agency detained Mohammad al-Bargash at his workplace, an electronics shop in al-Sulaibiya in Jahra Governorate, without an arrest warrant. He was held in pre-trial detention in contravention of article 69 of the Kuwaiti Code of Criminal Procedures (Law No.17 of 1960, amended in April 2021), which stipulates that «in all cases, provisions of pretrial detention do not apply to anyone who exercises his right to express and publish his opinion verbally, in writing, drawing, or otherwise, including if the expression of opinion is via the media or social media».

On 25 October 2023, a criminal court acquitted Mohammad al-Barghash, and he was released after spending over seven weeks in detention. However, the prosecution appealed the decision.

According to prosecution documents Amnesty International received, the Public Prosecution accused him of «spreading false news and rumours abroad about the internal situation of the country, aiming at weakening its prestige and reputation, during an interview he gave to a foreign channel, and posting statements on his X (formerly Twitter) account falsely stating that the group illegally residing in the country [the stateless Bidun] faced injustice under the control of an arbitrary government that denies human rights.»

**I urge you to immediately and unconditionally drop the charges against Mohammad al-Barghash, as they are based solely on his expression of his opinion and quash his conviction and sentence.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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